

# U MOJA

A play

Written by  
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**Current Draft**  
September 2023

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## TRIBE OF CHARACTERS

**NIKITA (NIKKI) DESROSIERS** - Black woman, early twenties, loyal. Grew up very Bourgeois. She's a woman who's no stranger to pressure and duty. She's the supportive girlfriend of Trayvon and helps him start the Umoja group. She's currently a junior Pre-Law major at McMillan University.

**TRAYVON GARDNER** - Black man, early twenties. Rejected from a Greek club and decides to create his own fraternity. Trayvon is one of those cool, charismatic types of jocks who just wants to implement Black excellence. He is currently a junior Business Major at McMillan University.

**TARONDA WESTON** - Black woman in her early twenties who takes no crap from anybody. A supportive and loving friend. Her and Trayvon been friends since they were kids. She's a junior and studies Communications at McMillan University.

**HAKEEM EDWARDS** - Black man, early twenties who cares only for the ladies. Sweet talking and also best friend to Trayvon. He takes a liking to Taronda. Even though he doesn't want to admit it. That's his Maxine to his Kyle. He's a junior Political Science major at McMillan University.

**DENORRIS LEE** - they/them. Black and in their twenties who is openly gay. They are fiercely loyal to Trayvon, and for a good reason. Studies Theatre Arts at McMillan University and is also a junior.

**AARON LEWIS** - Black man in his late teens who is considered a nerd. Sophomore music major. Soft and genial at heart. The baby of the group.

**DR. COOK** - A Caucasian woman who is the first female president of McMillan University. Proud. Good and well-intentioned. A woman who comes from strength, but had to fight to get here. Nikki's mentor.

## TIME/ SETTING

Fall Semester, 2022. Trayvon, Hakeem, Denorris, and Aaron's house.

The play is also set in the metro area of Birmingham, Alabama.

## SYNOPSIS

In the heart of Birmingham, Alabama, six courageous Black students who are desperate to be seen, heard, and protected set out to create their very own co-ed fraternity for the neglected Black population on the predominately white college campus of McMillan University. But, when their efforts are sidelined by racial tension and a scandal, these young friends are forced to band together, challenge their moral compasses, and face their dark secrets head-on.

## NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

To my beautiful brothas and sistas that will be portraying these characters, the stage area that is occupied as a living room, this is a sanctuary. A place where you can be free, be enriched, and truly express your Blackness. Be unapologetic about it. Be loud, cuss any and everything out, and know your anger and frustrations are justified. Stand in whatever truth that may spill out of your mouth. But ALWAYS and I mean always be UNIFIED with one another. Unity is very imperative to this piece.

Also, a lot of the dancing can be from Modern-day Black Greek Fraternity/Sororities. However, it is mostly inspired by current and traditional African dancing.

The dance itself is a call and response. It's a call to the Black ancestors who are the gems of the ocean. It's for our Black forefathers and mothers who fought tirelessly and to the death for our freedom. So let it move you in body and in spirit. Add flavor. Feel it, and have fun with it.

P.S. Sexual assault in this country is real, and it's a real epidemic that needs to be eradicated. Less than one percent of sexual assault cases are convicted, but wrongful convictions that led to the imprisonment and murder of Black men are real and need to be stopped as well. These false accusations have claimed the lives of The Scottsboro Boys, Emmett Till, The Exonerated Five, and sadly, too many to name.

Let's rise above it and continue to fight the good fight.

### **Unity (Umoja)**

Pronounced oo-mo'-ja

“To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.”

**CARRY ON.**

ACT ONESCENE ONE

*(At rise: We are inside the basement of a two-story-styled house that is occupied by college students, which means everything in this room is probably from Walmart or Big Lots. At the center is a shabby couch. One, however, can assume that somebody's cheeks definitely got clapped on this bad boy, but it was cheap enough for a college student on a budget. So, oh well. Off on the side is a flight of stairs that spills to the basement area.)*

*(Musty basketball shorts, gym bags, controllers from a video game console, and stanky-ass shoes are scattered about the floor. Papers and books are laid out on top of the coffee table. Somebody ain't been studying.)*

*(Adorning the wall is a Black American Heritage flag, proud pictures of our ancestors Kobe Bryant, Chadwick Boseman as the Black Panther, in all of their glory. Oh, and of course Queen Bey at Beychella.)*

*(In the back, the refrigerator is toppled with big boxes of cereal and ramen noodles, Cheetos with a bottle of hot sauce. Next to it is the washer and dryer, a bookshelf, and a tall studio recording microphone with Beats headphones hanging on the sides.)*

*(Some of that R&B music wafts through the basement while NIKITA "NIKKI" DESROSIERS sing, dance, and clean along to the song. She's spitfire a woman and she sounds gooooood, too.)*

NIKKI

Trayvon! Trayvon! *(To herself, under her breath.)* I swear these boys have no type of home training. Musty drawers everywhere. *(Now annoyed:)* Tray!

*(Nikki continues cleaning. TRAYVON enters. Basketball player. So, yes, he's wearing flip flops with socks on. A wrinkled T-Shirt and some sweatpants. Clearly, he just got out of bed.)*

*(But that smile, that smile can get him into some trouble if he ain't careful. He gingerly comes down the stairs.)*

*(Nikki continues to clean. Without her knowing, he sneaks up and grabs her from behind, feeling her up and kissing her neck.)*

TRAYVON

What you yellin' for?

NIKKI

Because y'all don't like to clean up after yourselves. And why are you waking up so late? Didn't you have Psych class this morning?

*(With out an answer, Trayvon steps away from her and drags himself toward the fridge.)*

All right, Dr. Miliron decides to fail--

TRAYVON

*(Grabs a carton of juice and chugs it.)*

Ain't nobody gonna fail. I can miss three. Thanks to your beautiful brain, I have an A, and he said there's no point of even comin' until the final.

*(Nikki can't help but laugh.)*

NIKKI

Don't get cute.

*(She makes her way over to the dryer and starts it. It rattles.)*

Everybody else gone?

TRAYVON

I heard Hakeem and Aaron leave early this mornin'. *(Yawning and stretching.)* Shidd, I'm tired.

NIKKI

That's from all that partying at Terrell's house after the basketball game. *(Off his confused look.)* Oh, I saw y'all on *insta*, smiling and looking goofy. Don't think you're slick.

TRAYVON

*(Dances.)*

Yeah, I ain't gon' lie, that party was lit as *fuuuccckkk*.

NIKKI

There have better not been any girls dancing on you, I know that.

*(She swats him on the side of the head.)*

TRAYVON

Don't you got class today?

NIKKI

You know I only had a six a.m. Why, are you ready for me to go?

TRAYVON

*(Pulls her close to him.)*

Hell nah. You know I love havin' you over here.

NIKKI

I bet you do.

*(They kiss. It's heavy. Needed. Something brews between them. Love? Pain? Emptiness? Whatever it is, Trayvon plays it off, and it's about to go down until...)*

TRAYVON

Ayye, you cookin' breakfast for me, bae?

NIKKI

Oh, so you can think about food but not class?

*(She pushes him off and crosses over to the fridge. She grabs...the box of cereal and places it on the table.)*

Oh, Dr. Cook finally got back to me about a day. She said that she could meet us tomorrow.

TRAYVON

About damn time. She's been givin' you the run around for weeks now.

NIKKI

All I know is this meeting has to be perfect.

TRAYVON

I don't know why we gotta go through all of this just to have our own group be official on campus. Bet you all the other clubs don't have to do this. But when *we* want our own, we gotta dance like little monkeys.

NIKKI

Tray...

TRAYVON

I'm just sayin', complexion for the damn protection. *(Beat.)* What type of presentation is it?

NIKKI

Oop, I'm glad you asked.

*(She excitedly throws several folders on the table in front of him.)*

TRAYVON

Damn, you wasn't playin' was you?

NIKKI

Now, you know when you asked me to do this, I would come at them with the whole nine yards. Okay, so, Taronda and I did a little research, and I believe we came up with a name for the group.

TRAYVON

(*Reads in "Coming to America" type of voice.*)

"Umoja." (*He lets that sizzle in his spirit.*) Yoooo, I like that. We're throwin' a little *Kwanzaa* up in there.

NIKKI

I only thought it was perfect since the group is gonna be about Black excellence and...  
(*Sings:*) U.N.I.T.Y.

TRAYVON

Cool, cool. So, we go in this meetin' with Dr. Cook and just--

NIKKI

You know, we basically say that we want to create our own official club on campus. But our primary goal is to make it more a *diverse* culture here at McMillan. Because let's be honest, they are lacking in that department.

TRAYVON

Hmmm, we gotta add that *diversity* shit to make it sound more appealin'.

NIKKI

(*Flips a few pages.*)

And we even have a lot of signatures, see?

TRAYVON

(*Rapidly counts.*)

Yo! Damn, that's almost a thousand people?

NIKKI

That's basically all of the Black students and then some who just want to support our cause. Aaron got some of his friends on the drumline to join, and Hakeem got your boys on the team to sign. So, I believe it's going to work. The university always wants to look good in the press about helping us out. Especially, since they had that whole thing with the last president, so it won't hurt them in any way. And it's not like we're gonna be ratchet or anything. Just us, in *our* own sanctuary.

TRAYVON

You know we gotta worry about the other Greek clubs. They all be in competition with each other. (*Slighted.*) I still can't believe I didn't get in.

NIKKI

Well, I don't know why you were even trying to get into that club in the first place. Don't try to be around something that does not want you there.

TRAYVON

*(Sucking his teeth.)*

I'm still trynna figure out how the hell Quan got in and I didn't.

NIKKI

That's easy. Upsilon met their *black quota* for the semester with him. And Sean, he's just jealous that you're a better player.

TRAYVON

Yeah, you're right about that.

NIKKI

Tell you the truth, he almost got cussed out for not passing you the ball that almost cost y'all the game.

*(She bends down and places the folder back in her bag. Trayvon studies that asssssss....licking his lips, being hella extra. Nikki, however, clocks him staring at her. Blushes.)*

NIKKI (CONT'D)

Why are you staring at me like that?

TRAYVON

I'm just lookin'. I'm just...I'm glad you're here, babe. *(Beat.)* Listen, about the New York thing--

NIKKI

Tray, I made the right decision, and I'm okay about it. I promise.

TRAYVON

But Nikki, we haven't really--

NIKKI

*(Stern.)*

Tray. We're now just getting over that hump, let's not get back into that. *(Breaks away and continues cleaning.)* How's your mom doing?

*(Trayvon notices her deflective demeanor. Wants to argue. But...lets it go.)*

TRAYVON

She's cool. I talked to her a few days ago on the phone. Apparently, she got in trouble at that work release place, and her probation officer had to call me. I had to talk him out of adding another year to her sentence. But, babe, for real, ever since my daddy died, she just went crazy, and I don't even know how to help her at this point.



NIKKI

That was a tough year, babe, for you and her. And it's good that you're going to those therapy sessions with Dr. Imani. I see that you're really improving.

TRAYVON

I am. *(A sudden sadness.)* I think I'm ready to go to the grave. *(Not trying to get into that.)* You know she tried callin' this morning but I ain't answer.

NIKKI

Let me guess, she's asking you for money again?

TRAYVON

You already know it. Like how the hell can I send you money? A brotha can barely keep up with playin' basketball and school, so I *can't* get a job. Speakin' of, I checked the portal the other day, and I'mma need Ms. Diane from the financial aid office to run me my refund check. They stay being late when *they* owe you. I went down there a few times to talk to her, but she either be at lunch or just not there.

NIKKI

Now you know when they owe you money they take their *sweet* precious time. But if it's the other way around--

TRAYVON

*(Bangs the table.)*

They be banging at your door like the damn police. It's whateva. The semester's almost over, so I'll make it work. Damn, which reminds me. *(Thinks.)* I do not feel like going back home for Christmas break.

NIKKI

Well, the offer of you coming home with me is still on the table, Tray. You know that.

TRAYVON

Yeah, right. You think your daddy will let that happen? *(Poorly mimics her father's Bougie-ass accent.)* "How dare you bring that poor boy to my house."

NIKKI

Okay, my daddy does not sound like. He is not classist. He likes you.

TRAYVON

Now Nikki--

NIKKI

Okay, okay. He tolerates you. But it'll be fun and romantic. We'll sit by the fire, eat, ooh, decorate a tree. You know how much I always wanted to spend the holidays with you, babe.

TRAYVON

And not be able to sleep in the same bed as you, can't do the *nasty*, and bein' hated by yo daddy all Christmas break long? (*Pssshhhh...*) Yeah, I don't count that as fun or romantic. Nah, I'm cool.

NIKKI

*(Leans down and nibbles on his ear lobe.)*

Please...

*(Trayvon doesn't budge. Nikki sensually guides her lips from his earlobes to his lips.)*

TRAYVON

What you doin'?

NIKKI

Kissing you...

*(They go at it. She kisses him more feverishly. Trayvon squirms. That blood pumping to ya know where. Yeah...she's got him.)*

TRAYVON

Okay. I know...what...you're trying to do and it ain't gonna work. Whew shit. Okay, fine, I'll...think about it. And don't be startin' nothin' you can't finish.

*(They go back at it. It's about to go down until...)*

NIKKI

Mhmmm. Yeah, you're right.

*(She gets up, leaving him high and dry.)*

TRAYVON

What? So, I ain't gon' get none? Yo, we got a little bit of time before my next class...

NIKKI

*(Points to the bowl of cereal.)*

Boy, go eat that bowl of cereal--

TRAYVON

*(Slaps her ass.)*

Oh, I'll *eat* somethin' alright.

NIKKI

Ugh-- boy, you better stop playing.

TRAYVON

You know I love you, right?

NIKKI

Yes. And I love you too.

*(They kiss again until a colorful knock from upstairs interrupts their intimacy.)*

TARONDA

Yo! Y'all down there?!

NIKKI

Yeah! We down here!

*(TARONDA WESTON stroll down the stairs with a giant three-ring binder. A Black girl that's exuberant. Outspoken. And wheeew, she's a sight to look at.)*

TARONDA

Whew, I am tired as hell. *(Sees Trayvon just lounging.)* Hmmmm. I see ya' wasn't in class this mornin'. Just leavin' a bitch out to dry, huh?

NIKKI

Oh, I got on to him.

*(Taronda pulls out a stack of paper and hands it to Trayvon.)*

TARONDA

You ain't missed much. That's the notes for the exam comin' up in Professor Isom's class. You know she's workin' my nerves. Oh, and she wants everythin' annotated this time. That's a big part of the grade, and she will *fail* that ass if you don't do it.

TRAYVON

Oh, word? Good lookin' out, T.

TARONDA

You welcome.

*(They give each other their special hand-shake.)*

NIKKI

So...you're just enabling him to skip class, huh?

TARONDA

Nikki, if it wasn't for Tray, I would've been so lost in Dr. Proctor's *Old Testament Survey class*. Bible classes ain't joke here at McMillan, and they're steady tryin' to make us minor in Biblical Studies. I ain't trynna be no damn 'preacha. Dr. Proctor had our asses in there learnin' 'bout the laws back in the day. Y'all know I'm ain't good with dates.

NIKKI

Taronda, it is not so bad.

TARONDA

It's not that bad? *I* can study for days on end and still end up with a B-. I almost had to cuss Dr. Proctor out in the name of Black Jesus because he's playin' with a sista's GPA. I'm on all these scholarships; they got me faawwwkkkeed all thee way up. I will shut the School of Religion down. Keep playin' with me if they want to.

NIKKI

I'm done. T, you brought the stuff over?

TARONDA

Right here. *(She grabs the colorful binder with the word "Umoja" on it.)* All the pages are laminated and er'thing. I tried goin' to Walmart to get it done because it's a little cheaper. But Chhhiilllee, that place is of the ghetto. So I had to go down to the Student Union and get it done. And then this gobble neck bitch gonna say, *(Putting on that "white girl" voice.)*. "What's a Umoja?" And when I told her, she just stared at me like I was Boo Boo the Fool. And y'all already know how I do when people like to stare?

NIKKI/ TARONDA

BOO, BITCH!

*(Laughs and high-fives between the homegirls.)*

TARONDA

Oh, she definitely looked at me crazy then. I almost had to snatch that bitch bald. As much as we pay this school, we don't have no type of group for Black folks to come and conversate--

NIKKI

Converse...?

TARONDA

*(Stares daggers at Nikki.)*

Okay, girl, you know what I meant. Anyway, y'all know I'm tellin' the truth. Um, Upsilon got they own thing. Epsilon got theirs. Them white girls is basic as hell. And they even got a Christian Key club. Chile, I don't know what the hell they be doin', but they're official. But none for us? Tray, though, I'm glad we creatin' that step team along with it too. Cuz y'all know I got the moves.

*(Both Nikki and Trayvon encourage her. Taronda steps into the center and begins to stomp and clap. Creating a percussive beat with her whole body. She does that shit for the ancestors.)*

*(It rattles the wall. The floor. It's fyyye as fuuuuccckk.)*

TRAYVON

Ayyy, fuck it up, T!



NIKKI

Taronda!

TARONDA

*(Puts up the knife.)*

Okay, don't get yo panties all riled up in a bunch. *(Shift.)* But anyway, y'all, I got some tea with Upsilon.

NIKKI

What girl?

TARONDA

So, apparently, they done took hazin' way toooo far. Quan had to go the hospital.

TRAYVON

What....? You serious?!

TARONDA

Mhmmm. Sean and 'em left that boy outside all night, no clothes on, nothin' at Oak Mountain. I don't know all the details. I just heard about it from class this mornin'.

NIKKI

He's all right, right?

TARONDA

I guess so. Of course, ain't nothin' bein' done about it. *(Looks at her phone.)* Anyway, y'all, lemme get on to this next class. I'll see y'all later on?

NIKKI

Yeah, don't forget to print out more flyers.

TARONDA

Okay, cool.

TRAYVON

Later, T.

*(Taronda throws up a deuce and disappears upstairs.)*

NIKKI

You probably should check on Quan.

TRAYVON

*(Dismissive.)*

Naw. He'll be cool. That's what he wanted, right?

NIKKI

Tray...

TRAYVON

What?! *(Instantly calms.)* Listen, they make you do some crazy shit durin' initiation week. Quan, probably just didn't hold up. Which is somethin' I already knew.

*(Nikki is bothered. Trayvon sees this and goes up to her, wraps his arms around her.)*

I'm proud of you.

NIKKI

You proud of me, for what?

TRAYVON

For doin' all of this. And being so supportive. I seriously don't know what I'd do without you.

NIKKI

Probably be in some lame Greek club, miserable.

TRAYVON

You funny. I'm gonna shower-- wanna join? We got a *lot* of time before my next class.

NIKKI

Boy, go get in that shower. I'm gonna continue cleaning up down here.

TRAYVON

Okay, suit yourself...*(Bends seductively.)* You don't know what you're missin'.

NIKKI

Boy bye...

*(He playfully runs upstairs. Nikki continues to clean up while the lights fade to black.)*

## SCENE TWO

*(As the lights rise, it's later in the day. Music blasts from a phone. Books are scattered on top of the table. Trayvon sits at the table, slurping up some of them Ramen noodles. A ring slice through the music. Trayvon studies it. Bothered. He quickly presses the end button.)*

*(The door from upstairs swings open. Echoes from ego-centric male conversation creep through. HAKEEM EDWARDS enters. A Brotha that stands firm in his beliefs and a bit grandiose. He's followed by AARON, soft and genial at heart. A type of person that you'd have to crack the code to get to know. DENORRIS-- someone who actively draws on both femininity and masculinity. \*NOTE: Please use proper pronouns when addressing them.)*

HAKEEM

You captain cap, nigga. And Kimberly wasn't checkin' for you, bruh.

AARON

'Keem, I swear she was lookin' right at me. I put that shit on God. Wadup, Tray.

TRAYVON

What y'all niggas 'talm 'bout?

AARON

His ass just mad because I got with Kimberly.

*(They both cross to the couch. Hakeem turns on the TV and XBOX console.)*

HAKEEM

He ain't get with her. Just got her number. *(Re: Kimberly.)* And maybe she was cock-eyed today. And plus...*(Twirls his fingers.)* She almost let me slip one in after class last semester in one of them Math and Science building bathrooms. We almost got caught too.

AARON

You straight lyin', bruh. She gave me her number first.

*(Aaron pulls out his phone and shows it to him. Hakeem smacks his lips with defeat.)*

HAKEEM

Nigga, whatever. She wanted the D. She slid in my DM's way before yours.

DENORRIS

*Oop*, c'mon receipts. And 'Keem, you'll get 'em next time.

*(A beat. The receipts definitely shows Hakeem is lying.)*

TRAYVON

Yeah, Keem. You can't get them all. And yo ass better be careful. You gonna have all them girls at the game, screamin' ya name, and it ain't gonna end good for *NOBODY*.

HAKEEM

That's a'ight. I'll let Aaron have this one. Like you say, Tray, I got plenty of 'em. Speakin' of, I need to hit one up right now. What's that girl's name, uh, Keke? *(Giving that lil bump and grind motion with his hips.)* Yeah, she put it on a nigga.

DENORRIS

Keke? You mean the TA for Professor Chamberlain?



HAKEEM

*(Cheesing hard.)*

Yup. That's her. I had her screamin' all kinds of shit in Norcross Hall. Had her RA come knock on the door askin', "um is everything all right?"

AARON

Man, what about Taronda?

HAKEEM

What about her? Ain't nobody even thinkin' about Taronda's ass.

DENORRIS

Now you know she's your *Maxine* to your *Kyle*.

*(Both Denorris and Trayvon high-five each other.)*

TRAYVON

They did say opposites attract.

*(They all laugh. Except Hakeem.)*

HAKEEM

A hee-hee hell. Y'all got me so fucked up. And it's Taronda that be wantin' the D. *(Body rolls.)* I just don't wanna overwhelm her with it, you know what I'm sayin'. Might have 'ole girl cookin' me breakfast like Nikki does for you, Tray. *(Shift.)* Do she actually know how to cook cause...homegirl had nothin' but maids and butlers.

DENORRIS

Uh-uh. Don't do her like that. But you ain't lyin' though.

HAKEEM

But for real though, this Umoja thing, this shit gon' be lit as *fuuuuck!*

AARON

Ayyye, facts! I can't wait to get started.

TRAYVON

Yup. Me either. And Nikki got even more signatures, she said. People is really excited. You know, Cody?

AARON

Yeah. 'Ol dude from Obannon Hall?

TRAYVON

Well, he told some of his buddies, and they are ready to join as soon as we're official. So Taronda and Nikki gonna handle getting rest of the members for the step team.

HAKEEM

Hell yeah. I'm with it. *(Quickly, to Aaron:)* Grab the other controller, let me whoop yo' ass.

*(Aaron grabs the other controller and they start to play the game.)*

AARON

Having somethin' like UMOJA on campus would be real nice.

HAKEEM

Shidd, we should've been had our own group. *(To Aaron.)* Ayye, don't start cheatin'.

DENORRIS

I already know what our shirts gonna look like and everythin'.

HAKEEM

Yeah...They better be fire too.

DENORRIS

Oh, trust, it will be. I got this on lock. This is the sketch I got conjured up. My new boo, he can draw soooo good, and he came up with this design. Check it out.

*(They show it on their phone. The boys look impressed at what they see on Denorris' phone.)*

AARON

That's tight. I like that. Gonna be dope, for real.

*(Trayvon makes his way to the back area by the dryer. Pulls out some fresh shorts. Stuffs in his duffle bag)*

TRAYVON

Ayye, y'all, what's goin' on with Quan?

DENORRIS

Oh, yeah, that's goin' all over campus. Did anybody go and visit him in the hospital?

*(A guilty silence from all of them.)*

AARON

Man, y'all, apparently, them Upsilon boys took some of the hazin' shit way too far. It was damn near twenty degrees outside, and Sean and 'em made the pledges sneak up to Oak Mountain, made them drink hella alcohol, and then jump into the lake. He got swept up, and he almost drowned in the deep end. They left that dude up there, to be found by a fuckin' park ranger, and now he prolly got brain damage.

DENORRIS

Wow. That's a damn shame.

HAKEEM

On God, Upsilon whitewashed-asses can go kick rocks for that. No cap, but it's time for Black people on this campus to have their own fraternity. *(Symbolizes with his hands.)* A real muhfuckin' brothahood, you know what I'm sayin'? And when Quan ass pull through, he better not go back to them. He betta come to us.

TRAYVON

Yeah. That's why Umoja gotta be here. It'll give Black students here on campus a place to come and just be themselves.

*(Trayvon places his hands around Denorris' shoulders.)*

AARON

Ayyye, even though all the HBCU's have their own Black fraternities and sororities, I'm glad you and Nikki are creatin' our own version of it here at this white-ass McMillan. Yo, everybody on the drumline, they ready. Shit, we can even do our own shows, especially at the games.

HAKEEM

Damn skippy, nigga! And it's gonna be Black as fuuuccckkk. Man, this campus has been skippin' out on us for far too long, so it's time. On God, they are doin' some dirty ass shit on the sly too, low-key. You know they got rid of the African-American studies this semester? Talkin' about they didn't have enough people to sign up. If y'all had promoted it like you make regular World History, then people would've signed up. I, for one, didn't even know they had African-American studies until Tray said somethin' about it.

AARON

Nigga, yo ass barely go to class anyway.

HAKEEM

Muhfucka, forget you. My GPA still out here lookin' like gas prices, the fuck you thought. The point is, I should have a choice to go to it or not.

DENORRIS

Well, you know how they do. But let's not cry wolf or be victims of it. Cause we're gonna turn this shit out like Beyonce did at Coachella. Periodt. *(Shouts and dance:)* SUCK...ON MY BALLS...SUCK ON MY BALLS BITCH!

*(Denorris dances, but Hakeem and Aaron don't pay them any attention.)*

HAKEEM

*(Back to the game.)*

Yo, that wasn't even a fumble! Man, on God this game is cheatin'.

AARON

I got your ass now, nigga. Thirty seconds left. You know you always fuck up at the end.

HAKEEM

Nah, I got you--

AARON

*(Jumps up.)*

Interception!

HAKEEM

Ah! The fuck?! I wanted my QB to go deep, over the top of the defense!

*(Denorris is on their phone. They rapidly types.)*

DENORRIS

They're still goin' ham on Boosie on this Twitter, chile.

AARON

Why?

DENORRIS

Cause--

HAKEEM

'Cause he said some shit about that Lil Nas X dude. Quite frankly, I kinda agree with him. High-key, that shit was a li'l too much at the VMAS.

DENORRIS

Ummmm, why? Because of the "kids?" Well, did anybody say the same thing when Normani and Teyana Taylor was dancin' on each other?

*(The boys crack the fuck upppp.)*

No. Because that is seen as a fantasy by you Cis Het men.

AARON

That shit was sexy as fuck though. I mean, I can't even lie.

HAKEEM

Okay.

*(They touch and agree in the most manly way possible. Denorris rolls their eyes. Annoyed.)*

Ah, here *they* go. I'm just sayin', I think ole dude be doin' the most. Honestly, I don't even think the nigga is gay in the first place. He trollin' everybody and trynna push an agenda.

DENORRIS

Okay, so you really gonna agree with Boosie? Is that what's happening right now? The same dude that had a grown-ass woman perform oral sex on his *thirteen-year-old* son?

AARON

Keem, they got you on that one.

HAKEEM

Yeah. You got me on that one, but I still think Lil Nas X is doin' *thee* most.

DENORRIS

See, that's the thing; everybody on social media loves to put the weight on Lil Nas because he is living freely in his truth.

HAKEEM

Ah, here they go, all emotional and shit...

DENORRIS

I'm not getting emotional. I'm just saying your argument is very flawed, and maybe you need to dive into those books you have on the shelf since you're so smart.

HAKEEM

Ah, I see, so a man can take a dick in his ass but what I say hurts?

DENORRIS

I've never been nobody's bottom...*bitch*. I'm on top. (*Beat.*) Your turn.

AARON

Oh, shit! Challenge! Let me get my hot sauce and Cheetos.

TRAYVON

(*Under his breath.*)  
Dayyyyummmmm.

(*Aaron goes to the back and grabs his bag of Cheetos and Texas Pete Hot Sauce and comes back to the sofa.*)

HAKEEM

You know what, I ain't even wanna get into this because I know how muhfuckas be acting sensitive and whatnot. I can't say the shit that has to be politically correct all the time. First, it was Da Baby, and now look at what they say about Dave Chappelle, trynna cancel him and shit. People are way too sensitive nowadays for the sake of likes.

TRAYVON

I mean, with Da Baby, I don't understand why the nigga couldn't say anythin' else. There was "Wave ya hand in the air, wave 'em like you just don't care..." The nigga had options.

HAKEEM

But Dave Chappelle ain't say nothin' wrong.

DENORRIS

I'm sorry, but Dave Chappelle is canceled for that stupid-ass special. He was transphobic as fuck. He has definitely gotten to the point of perceived invincibility of bein' offensive.

Newsflash: the shit wasn't that funny. And then proceeded to use his Trans friend to try to prove his point. Chile, please. He did the same thing white people do to excuse their racism: Oh, well, I'm not racist, I got Black friends. The fuck...

HAKEEM

Nah, I don't believe in cancelin' nobody. Especially our own. We got enough divide between us as Black people as is. And we all know people just love jumpin' on the "you're canceled" train for clout. (*Imitates the Drake waving his hand's meme.*) Ooh, let me get on Twitter and talk shit in a hundred and forty characters because everybody else is doing it. They be mad for like, literally two seconds, and then they jump on to something else that's trending. Get the fuck outta here with that bullshit. Y'all ain't say shit when he was makin' fun of Whitney Houston or her crack addiction. Or when he was on The Dave Chappelle Show, playing a fuckin' crack head. Niggas and white folks laughed at that shit. But when it comes to Black issues, which he stated, y'all only care to make an uproar because *white* gay people said somethin'. Y'all niggas nothin' but blind sheep.

AARON

(*Chomping on his Cheetos.*)

Okay, point for 'Keem.

HAKEEM

People do some foul shit, yes, but let's hold them accountable in our own spaces *while* uplifting our brothas and sistas. Because at the end of the day, you will never catch me tearing down my own people just to appease the *masses*. Got me *fucked* all the way.

DENORRIS

I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say, "cancel culture" is not real; we're just not taking bullshit homophobia and transphobia anymore. People love to talk down on gay people, but we have revolutionized the culture, dahling, and tired of being mistreated.

HAKEEM

Nigga, it's comedy. In that shit, **NOBODY** is safe. He made fun of niggas *and* white folks. What makes you think gay people are excused? People think just because they gay and trans, they try to be in the oppression Olympics.

TRAYVON

They do. (*Notices Denorris staring at him.*) D, even you gotta admit that.

DENORRIS

(*Hurt.*)

The homophobia and transphobia is real right now.

HAKEEM

Man, I swear people have been throwin' that "homophobic" and "transphobic" word around real reckless lately. Everybody can say nigga, and nobody bats an eye, but if people say some shit about gay people, oh, it's World War Three.

AARON

But 'Keem, maybe people just wanna be accepted, I mean, gay is the new--

HAKEEM

Don't you dare say it. Gay is *not* the new black. I'm tired of muhfucka's sayin' that shit.

DENORRIS

And how you figure that it's not?

HAKEEM

Uhh...Gay people didn't go through what Black folks went through. Being stripped of who you are and being discriminated against on somethin' you literally can't change.

DENORRIS

Hakeem, you are being very ignorant right now. People stand in intersections. There are gay *and* Black people. We've definitely been stripped of who we are, couldn't get married until, like what, yesterday? And can't even go into certain places. Some gay couples couldn't even vote or get health insurance. It sounds like the struggle to me. Gay people are tired of being a doormat to society and all this toxic masculinity bullshit that's been going on.

HAKEEM

Doormat? Toxic masculinity? Nigga, are you crazy? Who's been more of a doormat than Black folks? We built this fuckin' country and wasn't paid a Goddamn cent. But for us, Black folks always gotta be acceptin' of that shit they just don't wanna talk about.

DENORRIS

Yeah, and sweeping shit under the rug type of mentality has worked *sooo* well for us. People of color have to learn--

HAKEEM

Nah, leave that "people of color" shit at the door. We Black up in here, 'fam. And we have to stop generalizin' our struggles of being black to make everybody else feel comfortable. Our blackness is not interchangeable. Believe that. If you're gay, then you can stick your dick in a pussy or vice versa. And hol' up...Didn't y'all say sexuality is fluid or on a spectrum?

DENORRIS

Yes...

HAKEEM

That's my point. My blackness ain't fluid. I can't wake up one day and say, "ooh let me be a Asian or Hispanic."

AARON

El Negro-headed ass.

HAKEEM

But I'm serious though.

DENORRIS

Well, I just live my life and don't give a shit what nobody else says. Because it's hard everywhere, not just here. Hell, being Black and gay in America is almost a double negative, and that's something we have to get used to. So aren't we fighting for the same issues?

HAKEEM

No, we are not. You guys are fightin' for "change" and we're fighting for change. So no, we ain't fightin' for the same thing.

*(Everybody is hella confused. Aaron ponders this as well.)*

AARON

What you mean by that, bruh? Fightin' for the change point?

HAKEEM

Okay, check this shit out; since we're all up in arms with this whole "gay is the new black" thing, when has the gay community ever done shit for the Black community?

*(They all think about that for a moment. )*

I mean, we get shot down every day; they're silent. Show me, when a cop has ever asked a Black person their sexual orientation before killin' them? Nah, you're dead because you're a nigga in America. Not because you're gay.

DENORRIS

Are you serious right now?

HAKEEM

As a heart attack, bruh. What was the sexual orientation of Mike Brown? Tamir Rice? Or Breonna Taylor or Sandra Bland? Show me?

*(The names of those slain hits them to their core.)*

DENORRIS

For somebody to be so damn smart, it's clear that you haven't done your research. Alicia Garza, who is a Black and queer woman, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi started the Black Lives Matter Movement. So, that whole trope of the LGBTQIA+ community don't stand up for police brutality is kinda tired. Black Queer people have been fighting, at the forefront, when y'all mofos was still in your daddy's nutsack. Bayard Rustin. Advisor to Martin Luther King Jr. Lori Lightfoot. First Black lesbian woman to be Mayor for Chicago. And let's not forget JAMES MOTHERFUCKIN' BALDWIN!



## HAKEEM

Oh, okay, you comin' with the facts. I'll give you that. But hear this out, James Baldwin said, "the black plight and the gay plight are not the same." And was it *you* who said the LGBTQILMNOP, whatever the fuck it is now, be doing some fucked up racist shit with the Pride Movement and don't recognize the Black queer people like Marsha P. Johnson who even started it?

*(Denorris starts to answer, but Hakeem cuts them off.)*

## HAKEEM

And how they acknowledge only the gay white men shaking their asses, cosplayin' as Black women, and calling that diversity? The LGBT struggle is a struggle to practice a specific BEHAVIOR! The Black struggle is a struggle to be treated like a human fuckin' being! So, all I'm saying is, no, you CANNOT equate the gay struggle with the black struggle.

## DENORRIS

'Keem, when has Black people ever done anything for the LGBTQIA+ community?! Black folks are some of the most hateful and homophobic groups on this earth. "Black Lives Matter!" Yeah, only when it's not Black Gay or Black Trans live, right? You know what, I don't see Black people fightin' or advocating for Black trans women who are being MURDERED because a nigga wanna be DL so bad, and they go and kill them because they're conflicted with themselves. Or how about when forty percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ--

## HAKEEM

That ain't the same--

## DENORRIS

*(With a righteous rage.)*

Let me finish!!! Y'all remember Lamont, right? *(They are silent.)* Yeah, y'all do. Things were going all fine until his daddy found out that he was gay. He terrorized him every day for it. He beat him till he was "straight" again. It didn't matter. Well, until he liked this one straight dude, and shit went left. He outed Lamont in front of the whole school. People talked about Lamont like a dog. His "fellow" Black people. People like you, Hakeem. All because he was fucking gay?

*(Silence from Hakeem.)*

Y'all remember that he shot and killed himself right before our Junior prom, and guess who drove him to do it? His own people. All y'all did was offer up your bullshit ass condolences via Facebook posts and tweets and kept it moving like he didn't even exist. Like he didn't live. And every day, I have to look over my shoulder with that same same fear. When I listen to y'all talk and laugh about bullshit, and I have to bite my tongue. And at this moment, I'm wondering you...*(Points to Tray.)* Are you really my friend? *(Points to Aaron.)* Are you really my friend and you, 'Keem, are you really my friend? I have to battle with that every single day. I look out for you guys; I love you guys...I see all of you. But do you see me? Do y'all really see me?

So don't sit there and tell me that we don't have the same struggle because we do! Black folks do the same shit to gay people that white people have been doing to us since forever. *(Driving their point.)* Power...to the people...my ass.

*(All of them are consumed with a painful memory. Denorris starts to pack their stuff.)*

TRAYVON

Maybe we should just chill, y'all. Hakeem, bruh, you made your point.

HAKEEM

Aight, D, I hear you. And that fucking sucks. It really do!

DENORRIS

I just wish y'all get rid of this mindset, 'Keem. I'm Black and gay. It's not separate. It's just who I am. Black queer folks are out here dyin' because they just wanna to be themselves.

HAKEEM

Okay. And I know we never really said it, but I really am sorry about Lamont. I really am. But at the end of the day, when we walk out that door, ALL OUR lives are at stake. But fuck 'alla that, you're my nigga-*gender inclusive* of course, and I'd move heaven and fucking earth for yo ass. You know that. We cool?

*(A long, tense moment between them.)*

DENORRIS

Yeah, we're cool. Just please watch what you say, 'Keem. Because with that mentality that you have, you're *downing* your Black queer brothas and sistas too.

HAKEEM

Aight. That's fair.

*(Denorris and Hakeem gives each other a powerful embrace. Then Trayvon and Aaron join in.)*

TARONDA

Yeah, they're probably playin' that damn game.

*(They disengage their hug and hop on the couch, wiping tears, starting the game back up as Taronda and Nikki stroll in.)*

DENORRIS

Hey, y'all.

*(Nikki and Trayvon kiss.)*

TARONDA

Oh, good that you're here, these edges need your magic *touch*.

DENORRIS

Are you getting retwisted?

TARONDA

If you can. It's been about two weeks, and can you please use that Castor oil? It does wonders to this scalp, chile.

DENORRIS

I got you, boo.

NIKKI

*(Blocks their eyes with her hands.)*

Don't y'all got practice tonight?

TRAYVON

Yeah in about an hour. A brotha don't feel like going though...

AARON

*(to Hakeem.)*

You suck at this game, bruh.

HAKEEM

Shut the fuck up, we gon' play again.

TARONDA

Now he's gonna be looking like a sad pussy when he lose again.

*(Hakeem crosses over to Taronda. All smooth. Debonair-like.)*

HAKEEM

Taronda, why you keep messin' with me? I know you want me.

TARONDA

Want you? Boy, I would rather put my left titty in a panini press.

HAKEEM

Stop playin'. You know I can put it on ya'.

*(It's clear that she does indeed want him. But she ain't gonna let him know that.)*

TARONDA

Nigga please, I don't want you or your *little* wee wee.

HAKEEM

Yeah, you do. *(Quietly.)* And it ain't little.

*(Taronda goes to sit by Denorris. They starts to work their magic on her hair.)*

TRAYVON

Hey, babe. You seen my water bottle?

*(Nikki is already ahead of him and hands him  
the cold water bottle from the fridge.)*

Thanks, bae. Keem, if y'all want a ride back to campus, you better get your ass in that car.

HAKEEM

Yo, Tray, Walmart after practice. Our asses need some groceries.

TRAYVON

Aight nigga.

*(Nikki crosses over to Trayvon.)*

NIKKI

What time you'll be home?

TRAYVON

Probably late. We gotta get ready for the scrimmage game against UAB on Thursday.

NIKKI

Alright, babe. I got a study sesh at eight, but I'll be by here to bring you some food.

TARONDA

Y'all two need to get a damn room.

*(The boys disappear back upstairs. Nikki turns back to find Denorris and Taronda giving her a looooook.)*

DENORRIS

That's so sweet. Bringing him food and all of that.

TARONDA

Right. All perfect Black love. Reminds me of Jason's Lyric.

DENORRIS

Ooh, and Brown Sugar. *(Pause.)* Girl, y'all thinking about...you know?

NIKKI

What?

TARONDA

Getting married? I mean, we don't have long here until we all graduate. And y'all have been datin' since we were in middle school.

NIKKI

Maybe when the time is right, we'll cross that bridge. *(Pulls her flash cards.)* But until then, a sista has to focus on her studies.

DENORRIS

Y'all would be so perfect married. Just let me plan the wedding.

TARONDA

I'll be the Maid of Honor...or the Best/Woman? Well, hell, me and Trayvon been friends all our lives. We gon' make some shit up. *(To Nikki.)* Long as you don't be actin' like them damn Bride-Zillas because then, I'mma hurt ya.

NIKKI

Girl, slow your roll on the wedding bells. I think Tray and I are in a perfect spot right now, so we're just taking everything one step at a time. Y'all remember what happened last year?

DENORRIS

Yeah, you gave up your internship at one of the top Black law firms in New York City? Girl, I'm not gonna lie, I thought y'all was done after that.

*(Nikki stares off. Her thoughts tangled by a painful memory.)*

NIKKI

Me too.

DENORRIS

Do you regret it?

NIKKI

*(Thinks.)*

Giving up New York? Not one bit. I love Tray, and I just couldn't bear to leave him. Plus, thee Kamilah Forbes said I have a job there right after I graduate. But me and Tray, we're good...

DENORRIS

Ooh, speakin' of, girl, I saw Eddie starin' at that ass in History class. Ah, he's real cute. And them eyes...Lord!

TARONDA

Uh-uh, he into white girls and I need me one of those men that's not gonna be a fuck boy.

DENORRIS

You're not lying on that.

TARONDA

Dudes these days only want one thing, and with me, that's just not happenin'. I ain't giving up the goodies to just any old boy. You have to love me and call me sexy every day.

NIKKI

It's not about the looks, it's about what's on the inside.

TARONDA

Girl, save that shit for a Hallmark card, or better yet, a whack-ass Lifetime movie. Because niggas these days don't romance nowadays.

DENORRIS

Not all of them. My boo, he's good. And affectionate, chile. Whew. At first, it took me aback, a bit.

*(Nikki crosses to the table, grabs her study cards.)*

NIKKI

Why? It shouldn't.

DENORRIS

Just from experience. He makes me feel...safe. He lets me be...me. We were hanging out in his dorm the other night, talking about how Umoja is gonna change some stuff around here at McMillan, and it can really be a beacon for people like me, Black queer folks...because out there in the real world, we don't really have that.

TARONDA

See, that's what I'm talkin' about. And chile, I'm glad he's a brotha, too. Because the swirl thing...*(Shaking her head.)* Nope. My mama useta said, "Love is sumthin' powerful." And Black love...it gotta be protected as all cost. *All* types of Black love, you feel me? I know shit is complex as hell, but we gotta to learn to really love each other, and break them damn cycles. 'Cause where me and Tray came from, you don't see much of it. You see folks settlin', and Lawd knows we sistas deserve love without struggle. Amen?

*(Nikki and Denorris throw out their amens.)*

And yes, our beautiful black men deserve a Destiny Child's "Cater to You" type of love. If they act right. But it has to be reciprocated.

*(Nikki and Denorris glance at each other. Stifling a laugh.)*

TARONDA

What the hell y'all smirkin' at?

DENORRIS

You sounding just like...

NIKKI

Hakeem!

TARONDA

Chile, ain't no body thinkin' about him. He...

*(She can't finish. Which is a first. Nikki and Denorris burst into laughter.)*

TARONDA

Ain't nobody thinkin' about Hakeem--- *(She definitely is.)* Y'all get on my nerves. Anyway, Nikki you and Tray, just fight. Fight through it all, and with this Umoja thing, it's gonna be even more important to see a healthy, beautiful Black couple doin' the damn thing.

DENORRIS

Perioddddddttt. 'Cause we're all about breaking chains up in here.

TARONDA

Okay. We grow together. Y'all know what I'm saying? Be proud, laugh, and chile, live without regrets. That's my version of Black excellence. *(Beat.)* That's what Trayvon and you have. Y'all can be our Will and Jada.

DENORRIS

Whew chile, just don't go spill all your business at a damn red table talk. We don't know need no damn *Entanglements* up in here.

TARONDA

*(Grabs her phone. Taps on it wildly.)*

You right about that. 'Cause chile, niggas these days put their eight-digit passcodes, facial recognitions, and every damn thing. A bitch gotta be CIA to get into these dude's phones.

DENORRIS

Okay...

TARONDA

For real, though. And you gotta be careful of these hoes, they'll try to snatch a nigga up real quick. And then our brothers get a little money, and the first thing they run to is a white bitch with a fat ass and filler in their lips. They want the Black woman attributes on a Becky but don't want an actual Black woman? *(In her MoNique voice:)* Make it make sense.

*(They all bust out laughing.)*

DENORRIS

You are a fool!

TARONDA

I'm just saying, Queen Bey said it best, *(Sings:)* "I'm a brown skin girl and we're the best thing in the world." *(A moment.)* Just wish our brothas think the same thing. But...you know at the same time, us sistas gotta be accountable for a lot of shit, too. I know we don't wanna admit, but we do. And that's all I'mma say about that!

DENORRIS

Okay. But all I know is, we're gonna get Umoja on and *poppin'*! We get to come up with our own initiation week, events, and 'alla that. We're definitely not hazin', I know that.

TARONDA

Okay! Cause they are wildin' out here. And it's good to have this meeting and try to get it official before we go home for Christmas break. Speaking of, you and your family still going to that bougie-ass cabin in the mountains?

NIKKI

Yes, we are. And Tray is coming with me this time!

*(Denorris and Taronda share a look. Then burst out laughing.)*

DENORRIS

Girl, you think Trayvon gonna go home with you and Daddy? I know him and his mama are having problems.

NIKKI

Tray hates having to go home for breaks. You know he stayed up here the whole time last year? Daddy said I could bring him this time around. Well, after a lot of begging and pleading.

TARONDA

I don't know why you daddy tryin' my best friend. Tray's a good dude, good grades, and he's getting himself an education and beatin' the odds day by day.

DENORRIS

And Tray, wanting to do this step team, that's something constructive and good for him.

NIKKI

Listen, y'all do not have to convince me.

TARONDA

You know what, this got me thinking, I kind of wanna do like an African-American history type of class with Umoja. You know, teach the group about the stuff that they refuse to teach us. Especially with this whole gahhhhdamn Critical Race Theory thing going on. We educate our people on their rights. You know half of us don't even know when it comes to it.



Just in case one of these fake-ass campus security guards wanna get a little handy like they did with Dre last semester. I talked to Professor Imani, and she's down with coming in and helpin'. She's excited about it, too.

NIKKI

That would be really good.

*(A beat between all of them. Denorris clocks Nikki's nervousness.)*

DENORRIS

Girl, are you nervous?

NIKKI

A little. I mean, I don't know why. It's just Dr. Cook.

DENORRIS

Everything is gonna be fine.

NIKKI

I just don't want her to think this is some ghetto mess.

DENORRIS

Don't worry, Nikki. Umoja is gonna be fire. It's gon' be firrrreeee!!!

TARONDA

It's gon' be fiiiiirreeeee...

*(They continue to dance as the lights fade to black.)*

### SCENE THREE

*(At rise: Friday afternoon. The basement is back to being messy. Trayvon sits on the couch, studying, bobbing to some music. His phone rings. He looks at it. Another ding. The door from upstairs swing open, and we hear Nikki on the phone, making her way down the stairs. Trayvon quickly hides his phone.)*

NIKKI

Okay, it's no problem. We'll have the presentation set up here. Thank you so much, Dr. Cook. All right, see you in a little bit. Bye. *(She hangs up the phone.)* Hey, babe.

TRAYVON

Hey, what's that all about?

NIKKI

I invited Dr. Cook over here for the meeting.

TRAYVON

Yo, what?!!!

NIKKI

Tray, this is actually a good thing. She comes over, and we are in the confines of our home and be more comfortable. *(Seeing the mess in the living room, starts to clean up.)* And it's messy again. Tray, I swear I just cleaned up in here.

TRAYVON

I didn't know that you were offerin' *our* house for the meetin'.

NIKKI

Please do not argue with me. I'm already nervous enough, okay?

TRAYVON

Calm down, girl. You meetin' with Dr. Cook, not Jesus.

NIKKI

As if there's a difference. Put that XBOX up and put on some decent clothes.

*(Trayvon scuttles out of the way while she cleans.)*

And congrats on the scrimmage game against UAB. *(Pecks him on the lips.)* I knew you were going to kill 'em.

TRAYVON

Thanks babe. Forty-two points. *(Mimics himself shooting a basketball.)* Nothing but net. *Swooshhh.*

NIKKI

That's my baby.

*(Nikki crosses to the kitchen area and snatches the broom and dustpan. Trayvon's phone dings again.)*

NIKKI

Who's that?

*(Ding!)*

TRAYVON

*(Putting the phone away.)*

Just my mama. She keeps callin' me.

NIKKI

Answer it, babe. It might be important.

TRAYVON

No, this meetin' is more important right now. She good. I'll call her back later. *(Then...)*  
How was class?

NIKKI

It was interesting. We were doing Mock Trials, and Amanda King was really on one today. She almost made me catch a case, literally in the classroom.

TRAYVON

What she do?

NIKKI

We were practicing our opening remarks; she kinda had a genuine stank-ass attitude by it. I shrug it off because I was shutting it down.

TRAYVON

And you always do. Anyway, the Homecoming game is gonna be lit. And you, Ms. Nikki Desrosiers, will be my beautiful date, and I got reservations at that real fancy spot, Botega and Louie.

NIKKI

No, you did not! How? That place has been booked up for weeks.

TRAYVON

Coach hooked me up. He has a relative that works there. *(Twists her around like they're in a Fairytale.)* So, my beautiful queen, be prepared to be wined and dined.

*(They kiss. His phone rings again. Trayvon presses the end button.)*

NIKKI

Well, your *queen* has a presentation to prepare for. But, thanks babe.

*(The door upstairs open.)*

HAKHEEM

Yo! Y'all ready?

*(The rest of the gang all enter.)*

So, we goin' or what?

TRAYVON

Dr. Cook actually wants to meet *here*.

TARONDA

Ah, shit. That can't be a good sign. The president of the university wants to meet here?

NIKKI

Don't worry. I'm guessing she wants to make it a personal call.

TARONDA

Or tell us hell no to the face.

HAKEEM

We still doin' the step thing, right?

NIKKI

Everything is still on as planned. It's just here. Think about it, it'll be more comfortable in our own backyard.

*(Nikki gathers her portfolio and places a gigantic poster board on a stand.)*

DENORRIS

Well, what time is she supposed to be here?

NIKKI

In a few minutes. *(Sniffs.)* Y'all spray some Febreze around the house.

TARONDA

Yes, Lawd, 'cause somebody's nuts sittin' on straight salmon croquettes...

*(They disperse like ants. Denorris sprays some Febreze. Hakeem trails behind Taronda, putting on that meek and humble smile whenever he's trying to mack.)*

HAKEEM

T, so about homecoming game...

TARONDA

What about it?

HAKEEM

Girl, you know you wanna be my date. You gonna walk on that court and show off 'alla that sexiness you be carrying around. You know you want to.

TARONDA

Negro, please.

HAKEEM

Come on now, I'm bein' serious.

TARONDA

I'm being serious too, ya' know.

HAKEEM

Taronda, stop playin'. *(Sweet as pie...)* I really want you to go with me. I know we joke and shit, but you real cool.

TARONDA

Why you wanna go with me?

HAKEEM

'Cause I just do. And I know you wanna go with me too.

TARONDA

Oh, I do?

HAKEEM

C'mon, you can't deny this for too much longer.

TARONDA

You funny, Hakeem. Real funny.

DENORRIS

Girl, go with him.

*(Everybody in the back cracking thee hell up. Taronda smacks her lips, looks to Hakeem, sporting a sly smile. She's definitely swooned. Damn it, she can't help it.)*

TARONDA

Wipe that smile off that smug ass face.

HAKEEM

So, that's a yes?

TARONDA

Alright, fine. I'll be your date for the game. And you better buy me a nice dinner too, don't be a cheap ass. Tryin' to take a bitch to Applebees for that two for twenty-two. I know you how you do.

HAKEEM

I got you, li'l mama. I got you.

*(Taronda struts that good-good across the room, going back to cleaning)*

NIKKI

Okay, now that's out of the way, y'all--

*(The doorbell rings. Taronda goes to look out the window.)*

TARONDA

She's here.

NIKKI

*(Spitting off.)*

Okay, y'all. Everybody as we planned. Trayvon, you go answer the door. Ah, Taronda, go get the poster board from over there, and everybody act natural.

*(Trayvon goes upstairs. Taronda goes to set the poster board on a stand, "being overly normal.")*

What the hell are you doing?

TARONDA

Girl, being normal.

NIKKI

Bitch, if y'all don't move.

*(Nikki gathers everything and assembles it in order. After it's all done, Trayvon comes down the stairs, and he and DR. COOK are in mid-conversation.)*

TRAYVON

I just had to go for the game-winning shot.

DR. COOK

Well, I gotta tell you, it was undoubtedly a fantastic game against the University of Alabama. Coach Summers must be very proud of you for taking home the gold. The way you handled the winning shot, it was something.

TRAYVON

I sure hope so.

DR. COOK

Hello, everyone.

*(Everyone chimes with a simultaneous "hello.")*

NIKKI

Dr. Cook, thank you again for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with us. It is much appreciated. And congratulations on becoming the first woman president of McMillan U. *(Leads her to the couch.)* A long time coming.

DR. COOK

Oh, thank you, and it is no problem at all. I have to tell you when you came to me with this, I was very interested in hearing about it. *(Whispers to Nikki.)* You know the offer still stands in New York?

NIKKI

I'm good right here, Dr. Cook.

DR. COOK

Are you sure about this?

NIKKI

I am. *(Smiles.)* Dr. Cook, we all came to you with this because we feel that there's not an organization specifically geared towards the Black student body on campus. So, that's why we came up with "Umoja." The word Umoja is Swahili for "unity," and that's our motto, to provide unity. Also, to incorporate Black excellence across McMillan University.

DR. COOK

*(Thoroughly intrigued.)*

*Emooojaaa--*

TRAYVON

You see, ma'am, we feel that most of the Greek organizations or any other clubs, which are great, don't really gear towards the diversity of their peers. You see, I have applied to Upsilon every semester since freshman year and keep getting turned down or not accepted. So, I wanted to come up with this along with Nikki to help prospective students and us in the future not feel the way I felt.

TARONDA

*(Steps in.)*

We plan on creating our very own sorority and fraternity within the club.

HAKEEM

Also, include outreach programs that promotes unity.

AARON

Just like other historically Black fraternities and sororities, we plan to incorporate diversity and promote academic excellence, which that is the most important.

DR. COOK

So, you all want to make an official fraternity and sorority, like Upsilon?

NIKKI

Yes, and I've already researched the proper channels to make the club official. We feel you're the person to talk to and that it could happen with your blessing. Just for formalities, we have the Birmingham branch of the NAACP and The 100 Black Men of Alabama ready to sponsor us as well. So the financial logistics would not be a problem. *(Pulls out a clipboard full of pages.)* In any case, we have signatures of over twenty-five hundred students fully supporting the idea of Umoja. Black and white. Having Umoja be a part of the McMillan University campus would benefit the university and us.

*(Dr. Cook goes through the clipboard of names. She can't help but smile.)*

DR. COOK

Well, I am impressed. You have certainly done your research.

TRAYVON

And that's not all, we also prepped a little something for you.

*(Signaling them.)* LOCK IT UP!

ON MONDAY! DECEMBER 7TH, 2021!!!

*(His voice rises high to the listening skies. For the ancestors, all of their feet pound against the floor in unison. They lean to the left and the right. It's very tribal. African inspired. Nikki and Taronda lead them in a combination of stomps and claps.)*

ENSEMBLE

*(WAKANDA STANCE.)*

IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA!!!

TRAYVON

ON THE PREDOMINATELY--

ENSEMBLE

WHITE!!!

AARON

OVER 6000 STUDENTS BUT ONLY 200  
ODD STUDENTS ARE BLACK?!

ENSEMBLE

WHITE!!!

HAKEEM

EXPANDING CURRICULUMS BUT TERMINATING BLACK STUDIES!!!

ENSEMBLE

WHITE!!!

TARONDA

PROMOTING DIVERSITY BUT  
CREATING NO ENVIRONMENT TO  
NURTURE SAID DIVERSITY!

ENSEMBLE

WHITE!!!

TRAYVON

CAMPUS OF---

ENSEMBLE

MCMILLAN UNIVERSITY!!!

ENSEMBLE

MCMILLAN UNIVERSITY!

TRAYVON

SIX--



ENSEMBLE TRAYVON  
N-E-G-U-S RIIIISSSSSSIIING!!! FOUNDED--

ENSEMBLE  
UMEGA MU THETA JI(GEE) OTA LAMDA!  
INCORPORATED!  
*(Falls in line.)*  
OOOOOOOOOO MOOOOO JAAAAHHHHH!!!

ENSEMBLE  
1 BIG BALLIN' DREAMER  
1 SHOT CALLIN' BELIEVER!  
2 PASSIONATE PANTHERS IN THE MAKING!  
1 SWEEET ANGEL OF MUSIC!  
AND 1 FABULOUS QUEER.

DENORRIS ENSEMBLE  
*(With much pride!)* RIGHT HERE!  
BIRTHED  
THE FIRST CO-ED  
GENDER-INCLUSIVE  
GREEEEEEKKKK ORGANIZATION!!!

DENORRIS  
ON THIS CAMPUS--

AARON ENSEMBLE  
GAWWWWD BLESS THE DIVINE 9 BIRMINGHAM AL  
BUT AT THIS TIME  
MCMILLAN UNIVERSITY

AARON ENSEMBLE  
....NEEDED A SAFE HAVEN FOR ALL OF OUR KIND!

TRAYVON  
NOT TO CHASE THE WHITE AMERICAN DREAM  
TARONDA/ HAKEEM ENSEMBLE  
NOT OUT OF SPITE FOR WHITE BECAUSE UNITED WE STAND  
EXCLUSIVITY! BUT DIVIDED WE FALL.  
BUT OUT OF (BLACK LOVE)  
AND (BLACK SURVIVAL)

HAKEEM  
*MY OH MY OH MY*  
*TO BE SEE, HEARD, PROTECTED AND BE UNIFIED!*

ENSEMBLE

OH MY GOD!  
I LOVE MY OOOH MO JA!!!  
I LOVE IT  
I LOVE IT  
I LOVE IT!

NIKKI AND AARON

I AM SAFE  
SWEET ESCAPE  
THE ANCESTORS SMILE AS I HONOR THE NAME!

TARONDA

*(Sexy as hell with it.)*

BLACK! BLACK! BLACK!  
MY SKIN IS SO BLACK, I'M ROCKIN' THAT BLACK!

ENSEMBLE

BLACK! BLACK! BLACK!  
MY SKIN IS SO BLACK, I'M ROCKIN' THAT BLACK!  
OOOOH MOOOO JAAAA!  
UMOJA  
UMOJA  
UNITED MINDS OF JOINT ACTION  
YOU KNOW!!!

*(Wakanda Foreva!)*

DR. COOK

Wow. Absolutely amazing.

NIKKI

Also, I made this.

*(Nikki goes by the poster board and flips it over to reveal words meshed together in red, black, gold, and green. All in the shape of the continent of Africa. Dr. Cook stands up and gets a closer look at it. She's mesmerized. Trayvon is surprised by it as well.)*

DR. COOK

This is a lovely painting, Ms. Desrosiers. I never knew you were an artist. *(Turns to everyone.)* Nicely done, everyone. It is indeed a fantastic organization, and I have to tell you myself, Umoja would be a great addition to McMillan.

NIKKI

Seriously?

DR. COOK

Yes, of course. Why not? I believe that it would move McMillan into a new direction. So let's make it official. I'm all for change. Being elected the first woman president of this school, I believe McMillan University wants change as well. Also, you two, our star pupils on this campus, are spearheading this; they have no choice but to say yes, right?

NIKKI

Oh, thank you, Dr. Cook. Thank you so much.

DR. COOK

Come see me on Monday morning for all the logistics.

NIKKI

I will, I will. Thank you so much, Dr. Cook.

DR. COOK

See you all later. Congratulations and good work again. Trayvon, take us to the finals!

TRAYVON

You got it, Dr. Cook.

DENORRIS

I'll walk you out.

DR. COOK

Oh, thank you.

*(They both walk upstairs. The rest of the gang shrieks with celebration. Trayvon turns to Nikki.)*

TRAYVON

Baby, you did it!

AARON

We official, y'all! We're official!

TARONDA

*(Stares at the picture.)*

And *bihhhh*, why you didn't tell us that you're Picasso?

NIKKI

It was just something that I was always good at.

*(They continue to look at the painting)*

TRAYVON

It's beautiful, Nikki. *(Beat.)* I love you baby. Thank you for everything.

NIKKI

Of course, and I love you too.

*(The lights fade on them celebrating.)*

**SCENE FOUR**

*(Late Friday night. Some of music plays as the lights rise back up. Nikki and the gang dance. Trayvon and Hakeem enter, dancing with the rest of the crew.)*

TARONDA

(OOH) MOJA!!!

HAKEEM

Come here girl!

*(They dutty wine on each other.)*

NIKKI

Go ahead y'all.

TARONDA

Ayye!!! Queen Bey and Jay Z over here about to tear some shit up!

AARON

TO TRAYVON AND NIKKI!

*(They all raise their red solo cups with a celebratory gesture. Trayvon's phone keeps ringing. He looks at it and puts it back in his pocket.)*

NIKKI

Who's that babe?

TRAYVON

*(Dismissive.)*

My mama, still trynna call me.

NIKKI

Maybe it's important.

*(The doorbell rings.)*

DENORRIS

I'll get it. That's probably my doordash order, chiile.

*(Denorris exits upstairs.)*

HAKEEM

We gonna change some things around here, Tray. All because of you--

TRAYVON

Nah, man. It's Nikki. She did all this. My baby, my queen!!!!

NIKKI

Thanks, baby. I told you, I'll always believe in you.

*(They kiss. Hakeem's phone rings. The music stops, letting the phone ring through the Bluetooth speaker. He looks at it, freezes in mid-dance.)*

TRAYVON

What's wrong with you, 'Keem?

*(The music dies down. They all stop. Then simultaneously, all of their phones begin to chime off.)*

HAKEEM

Tray, what the fuck--?

NIKKI

Keem, what's wrong with you?

*(Her phone finally dings. She looks at it, and her eyes grow wide with surprise. After that, they all just stare at him.)*

TRAYVON

What the hell is goin' on?

*(After a long beat, Nikki looks up from her phone.)*

NIKKI

Tray...you and Amanda?

TRAYVON

What you talkin' about?

*(She shoves her phone in his face.)*

NIKKI

There is a video of you in bed on top of her?

TARONDA

Ah, hell naw!

*(Before Trayvon can give his side, Denorris appears at the top of the stairs.)*

DENORRIS

Tray, there's the police here at the door for you. They look serious.

TRAYVON

Okay...Nikki, I'll be right back, I'll explain.

NIKKI

Trayv!!!

*(Trayvon gives Nikki a look of remorse. With an impulsive feeling of shame, he makes his way up the stairs. Nikki and the rest of the crew is left dumbfounded.)*

*(Black out.)*

## ACT TWO

### SCENE ONE

*(Lights rise. Early Saturday morning Nikki paces back and forth. She's at her wits end on the phone.)*

NIKKI

I don't know! I have no idea what happened, or what is even going on. No, Daddy. Well, I knew they were going to call you. Okay, but we don't even why! Daddy, I can't talk about this right now. Bye.

*(She hangs up. Throws her phone on the couch. Taronda taps on the door upstairs and peers in.)*

TARONDA

Hey, girl, you doin' all right down there?

NIKKI

T, no. I'm so...I can't even make myself sit still. I'm still in fucking shock about all of this. They're not giving me any type of information on why he's been arrested. *(Off Taronda's tensed expression.)* But, girl, you know something?

*(This is a first, Taronda doesn't have anything to say.)*

T, tell me!

TARONDA

They're saying Trayvon raped that Amanda King girl at Terrell's party.

*(Nikki freezes at the news. It hits her like a ton of bricks. Crushing. Weighted. Both Nikki and Taronda internalize it for a moment.)*

NIKKI

Ra-Rape...?! Are they fucking serious?

TARONDA

It's been all over the campus, and now it's on the national news, too. Hell, his ass even made The Shaderoom and Tik Tok. People in the comments are wildin'. They're callin' him the "McMillan Rapist" and saying that's what he gets for messin' with that white girl.

NIKKI

Wait a minute, this doesn't make any sense. Amanda King--

TARONDA

Apparently, it's some skinny white broad in one of *your* classes. Now in the hell Tray get caught up with a white girl?

*(Nikki plops down on the couch. Her mind turns. It's too much to process.)*

NIKKI

All of this is happening so fast, I can barely think. I can't find myself believing that Tray raped somebody. I just can't. He just wouldn't.

TARONDA

Usually, it's a hit and quit it situation, and girls like her get mad, and cry rape to get back at them.

NIKKI

You really think that's what happened?

*(Her silence is the answer.)*

T, Tray is not like these other niggas, you of all people should know that. *(Realizes...She still edges to that possibility that he maybe he did it.)* I just don't know, girl.

*(Everybody enters from upstairs.)*

TARONDA

What y'all find out?

DENORRIS

They got him under a ten thousand dollar bond and his court date is not till Monday.

HAKEEM

We can't just leave him in there. Especially in that racist ass jail. And nothing better not be wrong with him, 'cause we all know Trayvon would never commit suicide.

*(Nikki is struck by that statement.)*

DENORRIS

Your call, Nikki.

NIKKI

My call? Why does it have to be my call?

TARONDA

That's right girl, I say teach his black ass a lesson.

HAKEEM

Man, fuck 'alla that. We gotta go get him.

TARONDA

And why? Because he's your homeboy? He cheated on Nikki, and fucked a white girl on a predominately white campus--

HAKEEM

We don't even know if that shit is true! Y'all know how these hoes are. They be lyin' and shit. C'mon y'all. It's the same old story. Ain't shit changed. Y'all know she's lyin'.

TARONDA

Go on with all of that! The only one's lying in this situation is Trayvon.

HAKEEM

I ain't leavin' my boy in no jail cell where they can kill him and not think twice about it. Hell, half of that police down there work on the campus. What you think is gonna happen to him? Police probably beatin' the shit out of him right now.

TARONDA

He should've thought about that before he done stepped out on Nikki and raped that white girl. Trayvon better get his ass ready for the *Green Mile*...

*(A broken silence. Hakeem looks to all his friends.)*

HAKEEM

C'mon, y'all. You seriously cannot sit there and believe Tray would rape somebody. *(Beat.)* This is some fucking bullshit, and y'all wack as fuck for believin' this. Man, fuck this, I'm gonna go get my friend.

TARONDA

I hope you got ten thousand dollars for his bail?

*(Hakeem stops at the foot of the steps. Thinks.)*

Yeah, I didn't think so.

HAKEEM

Wait a minute, Nikki's dad is a lawyer. A good one at that.

AARON

Maybe we should just--

HAKEEM

*(Goes up to Nikki.)*

Nikki, no matter what he did, we still gotta help him. He's our friend, and that's the man of your life. You can't just turn your back on him at the drop of the dime. Please...

*(Again, they're all silent.)*

C'mon y'all, we're supposed to be his fuckin' friends.



TARONDA

Girl, don't help him.

HAKEEM

What the fuck, Taronda?! Bitch! Just because you bitter don't mean Nikki gotta be!

*(Taronda swoops back. Ready for war.)*

TARONDA

Bitter? Nigga, you tried it. Just because we don't come at every beck and call when y'all dumb ass niggas get yourselves in trouble, we're bitter now? You know what, it's niggas like you, like Tray, who think you can do any fuckin' thing in this world and not think about how it affects others. Here we have the star of the basketball team, trynna get this Umoja thing goin', and what does he do? He goes out and rapes some white girl, gets in trouble, and everybody expects his *Black* woman to pick up the pieces? If we Black women are so bitter, it's because of niggas like you and Tray! You got me fucked up.

NIKKI

Taronda, y'all stop!

TARONDA

No! 'Cause I'm tired of our men thinking less of us but expect the world whenever they get stuck in the mud. Nikki, no matter what, we always come second to them. Blaming us sistas for the problems *they* create. *(Turns back to Hakeem.)* And y'all sho' do *loooooo* going after Becky when you know good, and damn well it has gotten brothas like Trayvon killed or in prison. And when shit goes down, where they at? Huh?! Where?! Exactly. Y'all niggas will never learn.

HAKEEM

You can't keep runnin' yo' mouth and shit--

TARONDA

Nah, fuck that! You always got somethin' to say! That's my homegirl--

*(Everything escalates until...)*

AARON

Stop! STOP FIGHTIN'!

HAKEEM

Bruh, what the fuck? Why are we just sittin' here?!

AARON

You gotta think for a second, Keem. Just for a second. Nikki just found out her boyfriend is in jail for rape. For rape. *(Beat.)* Let that sink in. And not once have we asked how *she's* feeling about this.

HAKEEM

Nigga, with all due respect, but you're new to the group.

*(He steps up to Hakeem.)*

AARON

*(Doesn't back down.)*

Nah, nigga, with all due respect, I don't give a fuck.

*(Oh, shit! These Two Alphas go at it!)*

DENORRIS

*(Steps in between them.)*

Y'all stop!!! Times like this we gotta stick together. *(Crosses to Nikki.)* Nikki, I know this is crazy, but what are *we* gonna do?

HAKEEM

*(Eyes still on Aaron.)*

Yeah, what we gonna do, *Nikki?*

TARONDA

What you gonna do, *bitch?*

*(Nikki looks to all of them. A dilemma plagues her mind.)*

NIKKI

Let's...go get him.

HAKEEM

Cool...I'm gonna go get the car.

NIKKI

Yeah, I'll catch up.

*(They all slowly exit, except for Taronda.)*

T, I need you on this.

TARONDA

Girl--

NIKKI

Taronda, please. He's your friend too.

TARONDA

You my girl, you know I'm gonna be here for you. Ugh. Let's go get his triflin' ass.

*(They hug. Taronda and Nikki both exit. The lights fade to black.)*

SCENE TWO

*(Lights rise. Early Monday morning. Trayvon is laid out on the couch, deep in thought. His phone rings. He answers)*

TRAYVON

Hey, Mama. No, but I'm pretty sure Auntie Carol told you. No, I'm cool. Nikki bailed me out of jail and got me a lawyer. Mama, I didn't rape that white girl. I know, Mama. I know. I don't know what's gonna happen. They expelled me. Mama, I promise I didn't. *(Not wanting to hang up just yet.)* How's rehab? That bad. It's good for you, it's helping you. I can't wait to see you too. Okay, I'll PayPal you some money. You're welcome. Well, alright then. Okay, Ma. I love you so much. Bye.

*(Denorris enter, and sees him. They go to the fridge. Grabs something to drink and hands it to Trayvon.)*

TRAYVON

Thanks.

DENORRIS

Sure. You wanna talk about it?

TRAYVON

No.

DENORRIS

It ain't good to hold it all in.

TRAYVON

Yeah, I know. Can't fucking believe it. I'm still trying to catch wind of it all.

DENORRIS

Aren't we all?

TRAYVON

I bet Nikki so fuckin' mad at me. She didn't even talk to me on the way home.

DENORRIS

I mean, she's pretty hurt, Tray.

TRAYVON

I know. I'm surprised she even bailed me out. That girl is a keeper. Loyal as fuck. Gahhh damn, I'm so fuckin' stupid.

*(Another question hangs in the balance...)*

DENORRIS

Tray...Did you really rape that girl?

TRAYVON

Come on, yo...Not you too!

DENORRIS

I'm just askin'. I gotta ask.

TRAYVON

Hell no, I ain't rape that white girl! We were just havin' sex, and that's it. I didn't rape her. I feel like y'all don't even believe me. Like what the fuck?!

*(He storms mightily for the stairs.)*

DENORRIS

TRAY! *(Trayvon stops at the edge of the stairs.)* Whether you believe it or not, this is not just happenin' to you. It's happenin' to all of us. You seriously can't sit here and think you're the only one being affected by this. You put us in a very dangerous situation. I'm sorry, Tray, but that's the truth. And, of course, the question has to be asked.

TRAYVON

*(To himself, mostly.)*

I didn't rape her.

*(Denorris place their hands around Trayvon's neck. It's tender. Yes, Trayvon allows it. He's secure in himself.)*

DENORRIS

Alright, man. Okay, I believe you. Hey, I believe you.

TRAYVON

It sure as hell don't feel that way.

DENORRIS

Well, I do. And I'm here for you. I'm always here for you, Tray.

TRAYVON

Man, fuck this!!! Why she gonna say I raped her?

DENORRIS

Then what really happened that night? 'Cause dude, you gotta start talkin'.

TRAYVON

It was right after Nikki went to the clinic, and I didn't get into Upsilon. But durin' it, Amanda, Sean's girlfriend, was comin' onto me mad hard. I don't know...it was like she understood me when Nikki wasn't. Ya know what I mean? Hell, I thought me and Nikki were done at that point. Amanda, she just got me on a lot of things. She told me that it was racist about what Sean and 'nem did. So, after me and Nikki got into that argument, I left and went to the party. She was there.

We just kept talking, laughing, and you know, I took her upstairs, and that's when it happened. We had sex. Yes, more than once, but I didn't rape her. I broke it off. I told her that I loved Nikki, and it was over. She got mad...and kept callin' me and callin' me, and I guess this is her *last resort*.

DENORRIS

You know you my homie, but you should've of told Nikki.

TRAYVON

But how? How could I have told her somethin' like that?

DENORRIS

Nikki is a strong girl. She could've handled it, Tray. *(Beat.)* But you gotta fix this.

TRAYVON

How do I fix it?

DENORRIS

I don't know, but you'll figure it out.

TRAYVON

...the whole school is turnin' their backs on me.

DENORRIS

Fuck them. You know we got you. *I* got you. Shit, you been there for me, so I'm gonna stand by you. You remember when I first told my dad and mama about...me, and they fucking flipped?

TRAYVON

Yeah, they kicked you out.

DENORRIS

I had no where to go. But who was there first? You? So no matter what, I'm down for you. I'm here for you, Tray.

TRAYVON

Thanks...D.

*(Trayvon and Denorris hold hands. Hakeem and Aaron enter. Both had just woken up from their sleep.)*

HAKEEM

Damn nigga, you ain't take a nap?

TRAYVON

Nah, man. I got a lot on my mind.

HAKEEM

Shit, rightfully so.

AARON  
You need anything, man?

TRAYVON  
Nah, I'm good. I'm good. Thanks.

AARON  
So, what now?

TRAYVON  
I mean, I got a meeting with the board. Probably gonna take away my scholarship or hell, even expel me.

AARON  
Man, it's not fair.

HAKEEM  
The world ain't never fair to niggas like us.

TRAYVON  
Everything I worked for, all going down minute by minute!

HAKEEM  
Well, we got you. We gonna stand by you. No matter what.

*(They all hold for a moment until the lights fade on these brothas in unity.)*

### SCENE THREE

*(Later that evening. Taronda bee-lines the living room, packing some books into her bag. Trayvon hangs about on the stairs. Guilty as hell.)*

TARONDA  
I ain't got time to talk right now. Nikki told me she left some of her stuff.

TRAYVON  
She couldn't come get them herself?

TARONDA  
She don't wanna see your stupid ass.

TRAYVON  
Come on, T--

TARONDA  
Come on, what? How could you break Nikki's heart like that, and for a white girl, really?

TRAYVON

Look, I'm sorry.

TARONDA

Tray, I am not the one you need to be apologizin' to. You need to be apologizin' to Nikki.

TRAYVON

She ain't answerin' the phone or my texts.

TARONDA

Can you blame her? If it was up to me, your dumb ass would've been straight blocked.

TRAYVON

T, come on now. We're friends. Best-friends.

TARONDA

You should've thought about that before you done stepped out on Nikki. She was good to you, Tray. She was there for you when them white folks weren't. She believed in you. Hell, that girl gave up the biggest opportunity of her life in New York for you. And you do her like this?

TRAYVON

I know--

TARONDA

Do you? *(Beat. She goes to exit. But stops.)* Why did you do it, Tray?

TRAYVON

I don't know, I was being stupid.

TARONDA

Ya' think...We've been friends since we were in pampers, and I don't know you right now. This is not you, Tray.

TRAYVON

It was a mistake.

TARONDA

You didn't make no mistake. I'm pretty sure you had plenty of chances to tell her what was going on. *(Really looking at him.)* You were the epitome of a good brotha, and you--wow. Here we thinkin' that this whole Umoja thing was good, but it was all for show, huh? You were feeling guilty. Umoja, my ass...

TRAYVON

No. That was real.

TARONDA

You forgot where the hell you at. Ain't even made it to the league and you're already caught up.

TRAYVON

T, I'm sorry--

TARONDA

And I couldn't bring myself to believe it, but you're just like the rest of them. You niggas *loooooovveee* your white girls. I mean, this self-hatred is fuckin' bafflin' to me, like for real. And the crazy thing about it is everythin' they got they got from us. Y'all love when they get them BBL'S, them fake titties, skin all blotched to look like us. They snap their neck, talkin' all loud and you stupid niggas call that "oh, they're acting spicy." But they're out here, walkin' around, profiting off of what God gave us naturally. At every turn, y'all fail to recognize that they will NEVER be like us. Their crocodile tears will get niggas like you killed, and y'all still go after them. What did I tell you? Hmmm? The most dangerous thing to a Black man is a white woman's tears. (*Pushes his head with her finger.*) And as soon as y'all get it through your thick, stupid ass skull, the better off y'all be.

TRAYVON

T--

TARONDA

Y'all niggas only care about yourselves.

TRAYVON

That's not true! I care about all y'all. I care about Umoja.

TARONDA

Well, you can say good-bye to all of that, my *brotha*. You're goin' down in flames, and Umoja, Nikki, us are all gonna burn right along with you.

TRAYVON

What you mean Umoja gonna burn?

TARONDA

Dr. Cook called a meetin' after your *little* incident. She wants to meet with her.

TRAYVON

She's gonna cancel Umoja, isn't she? (*Slowly realizes...*) Shit...This really is my fault. Maybe we can all just sit and talk...

TARONDA

Bye, Tray...



*(There is a sound of glass breaking upstairs and tires screech in the distance. Trayvon instinctively blocks Taronda, protecting her.)*

TRAYVON

Yo, Keem, Aaron, Denorris?! Y'all cool?

*(Hakeem appears at the top of the stairs.)*

HAKEEM

Yo! Them mothafuckas just threw a brick through our window!

*(They come down the stairs. Hakeem has a brick in his hands. A note is attached to it.)*

Sean and his bitch ass boys from Upsilon! Look at what this shit say!

TARONDA

*(Reads the note.)*

“RAPISTS and NIGGERS don't belong here at McMillan U.” And look at that fuckin' drawin'.

*(The words ‘Rapist and Niggers’ send a ripple of tense silence between all of them.)*

DENORRIS

What era are we livin' in?

TRAYVON

I'm finna fuck they asses up!

HAKEEM

My niggah, I'm right behind you.

DENORRIS

TRAY, STOP! What are you doin'?

TRAYVON

I'm gonna go kick they asses that's what  
I'm gonna do---

HAKEEM

Hell yeah, bruh, LET'S FUCKIN' GO!

AARON

Y'all stop! That's what they want you to do. Don't take your ass over there. Campus security will be there waitin' on you so fast.

DENORRIS

And you're still on bond. Don't do this.

*(Trayvon sits still. Thinks. Broken. Falling the fuck a part.)*

TRAYVON

Man, FUCK!!! I'm sick of this shit, man. I AIN'T RAPE THAT FUCKIN' WHITE GIRL!!! (*Slipping to that deep, dark place.*) Yo, Y'all talked to Nikki? Y'all make sure she's alright.

(*Taronda rapidly texts on her phone, scared.*)

TARONDA

Ummm, she's fine. She's textin' back now. (*Crosses over to the stairs.*) I'mma head back to the dorm.

TRAYVON

Taronda?

TARONDA

I got nothin' else to say to you, Tray.

TRAYVON

Please, we're friends...

(*Taronda is silent. Unyielding.*)

HAKEEM

Taronda, we gotta stick together. Come on now.

TARONDA

My loyalty lies with my sista.

TRAYVON

I know that. (*He softly grabs her.*) But I need my friend, my sister too. I'm not gonna make it without you.

HAKEEM

Come on, T.

(*She looks at Trayvon deeply. Then she feels the eyes of the others on her. Hardened heart melts...*)

TARONDA

Y'all get on my nerves.

HAKEEM

That's my girl. Bring your sexy ass over here.

TARONDA

Boy, shut up. And I ain't completely forgiven you, Tray...But we do gotta stick together. Cause ain't no tellin' what these white boys gon' do.

TRAYVON

Thanks, T.

*(They hug.)*

HAKHEEM

That's what I'm talkin' about!

*(Taronda and Trayvon hug. Hakeem tries to get in, but Taronda gives him that 'go home, Roger' type of push. And they all stare at the brick as it haunts their sanctuary. Their cocoon.)*

*(The lights fade to black.)*

#### SCENE FOUR

*(Lights rise. Next evening. Nikki is downstairs, sitting on the couch, staring at the brick. She's fucking mortified. Her phone rings. A moment. Nikki steels herself before she answers it.)*

NIKKI

Hi, Daddy. Yesssss, I know. I withdrew the money from the account. To help Tray, why else? *(Pause, then annoyed.)* Look, Daddy, I don't need your "I told you so's" right now. Okay. Already going through it. Yes, I've already called Kamilah. *(Spots Trayvon by the staircase.)* Well, you know what, Daddy, I'm gonna call you back on that.

*(She hangs up the phone.)*

TRAYVON

Hey, babe...

NIKKI

Tray, why do you keep calling my phone?

TRAYVON

Because nobody really haven't heard from you since everythin' went down with them Upsilon boys.

NIKKI

I made it like that for a reason. *(Sees the worry in his eyes.)* I'm fine. Hakeem and Aaron walk me and Taronda to class, so it's cool.

TRAYVON

Nikki, I'm really--

NIKKI

What is it that you want, Tray?

TRAYVON

I just wanna talk. That's it.

*(Nikki gives a deadly silence.)*

TRAYVON

*(Goes to hug her.)*

Nikki, I'm so sorry.

NIKKI

Don't touch me, Tray!

TRAYVON

Nikki, please just talk to me...

NIKKI

Why did you have sex with her?

TRAYVON

Come on, Nikki--

NIKKI

"Come on Nikki, let me tell you why I had sex with that white girl!" *(Shift.)* Do you love her?

TRAYVON

Hell naw, I don't love that girl. I love you and only you! Baby, I made a mistake.

NIKKI

A mistake?! Tray, you had sex with her intentionally. And for what, huh? To get back at Sean? Was it to get back at me after getting rid of the baby? *(Off his silence.)* Oh, so maybe you did rape her.

TRAYVON

I didn't rape her. She kept me callin' after it happened. I've been trying to get that girl to leave me alone for weeks. Look, Nikki, I feel like shit--

NIKKI

Good. You should feel like shit. But it's nothing compared to how I felt finding out my man cheated on me through a video.

TRAYVON

Okay. What can I do?

NIKKI

When did it start?

TRAYVON

What--?

NIKKI

Nigga, I did not stutter. When did it *start*?

*(A swelling beat.)*

TRAYVON

That night after you went to the clinic...When I went to Terrell's party.

*(Nikki is gutted. She leans down, too angry, too hurt to process Trayvon's truth.)*

NIKKI

Oh, my God. So, instead of fixing things, you go off and have sex with some white girl. Here I am, at home, feeling sick as a dog, and you go have sex with Amanda King. Why?

TRAYVON

She understood me...she understood how I felt.

*(Nikki takes in that low blow.)*

NIKKI

Trayvon Gardner, you are nothing but a fetish to her. That's all you'll *ever* be to them. A *big* dick that can appease her rebellious itch, so she could go and make *Daddy* mad, and post it on Twitter to show how she's *soooo* progressive and all about the "culture." Yet, you Black men continuously make it your mission to put white women on a pedestal because they "understand you". They make you feel some type of comfortable and give you everything that you *think* you need or want. They make y'all feel like you're in control. But no, no, no, *this* is not about Amanda or her pathetic attempt to try to understand your strife. This is about us. You had sex with her to get back at me because I didn't come to you about a decision that would've changed the rest of *our* lives. Okay, you used that to make yourself feel better. But at the end of the day, you still cheated on me, Tray. And now she's crying rape. Wow. You are a literal walking stereotype right now.

TRAYVON

They have no evidence that I raped that girl.

NIKKI

They don't need any of that, Trayvon. You're a Black man accused of sexually assaulting a white girl. It doesn't matter what you say or do. You will always be guilty until proven innocent. And if you fight it with everything you have, they will hunt and take you down and lynch you in the most modernist way they can. *(Beat.)* Be truthful for once. Tell me why.

*(A moment. Trayvon recalls his thoughts.)*

TRAYVON

Because I was mad at you. I was so pissed off because you didn't give me any say. That was my baby too, and you didn't give me a choice.

NIKKI

That's not fair--

TRAYVON

What you did wasn't fair!!!

NIKKI

I have told you time and time again, I did it for our future. We are here in the prime of our lives, and we were not ready--

TRAYVON

That baby was our future, and you've destroyed it. You sittin' there sayin' you did it for us. No, Nikki, you did it for yourself. For you. Because it's always about the Nikki show. Whether you want to admit it or not, you *love* be in control over everythin', and it kills you if you ain't. And so you go out and get an abortion without even talkin' to me. That baby would have been everything to us. You and me, we would have given it love. A sense of security. You know I ain't get that at home. My mother was an alcoholic! She couldn't put the goddamn bottle down to save her life, Nikki--

NIKKI

Tray, we weren't ready--

TRAYVON

Stop sayin' we weren't ready! I love you. You love me. And I would've married you! It would have been me, you, and our beautiful baby, Nikki. I would've built a life for us! So don't give me that bullshit.

NIKKI

And how would we take care of this baby while I'm at class, huh? You would stay home from practice while I had to take my final exams? Or would you stay up late at night, trying to get the baby to stop crying with me, knowing you have a big game coming up next day? Would you give up basketball, and your scholarship and your education your father wanted so desperately for you when it gets too much? Please, tell me. Because if you can do that, I will lay down right now and let you put a baby in me. I swear to God, Tray. No. You and I both know that's how it would not have played out. My family would've disowned me, and we would have nothing to our names. Struggling to raise this innocent child who didn't ask to be brought into this world. We would've forgotten about our very own dreams. Forgotten about ourselves in the process. No. I do not want to sign up for that life, Tray. I don't, and I'm done talking about this.

TRAYVON

*(Starts clapping)*

And there it is. The Nikki Show, ladies and gentleman. *(Shift.)* Why are you with me, Nikki?

NIKKI

Tray, you know why--

TRAYVON

No, no, answer the question. Why are you with me? Is it some rebellious itch against *your* daddy? I mean, we gotta be real, we come from two different sides of the tracks, Nikki. With everything, your bougie ass upbringing', your sididdy-ass mama and daddy, you really think you're gonna struggle? Or get cut off from your parents? You're in denial, Nikki. That is not how it's gonna go down, and you know it. So what are you runnin' from because this shit don't make sense.

NIKKI

No! You are not gonna do that. You will not turn this around on me, and you will certainly not talk about my parents. YOU messed this up. YOU walked out on me that night. And yes, Tray, you just have to let it go and trust that I made the best decision for the both of us.

TRAYVON

I'm so tired, Nikki. *(A moment of truth.)* I am so fuckin' tired. Out here, feelin' the weight of the world and all of my life, I felt like I'd been chasing something. Rippin' and runnin' all over the place. Basketball...school...and Umoja. I had to chase after my mama while my fuckin' daddy was dying and taking his last breath. She around the corner, drownin' out her sorrows, but what about me?! Nah...all I do is keep it moving because I ain't trynna feel that shit. I came to this school, got all these eyes on me. I'm tryin' to keep my gahdamn head above water. I only got so many ways to go before it all crash and burn. I ain't got nothing else to give! I. Am. Numb. And for that, I'm scared to go to bed at night, Nikki. Because I'm thinking: is it worth it? Is it all worth it? Then I think about how I can end up like my daddy, dyin' with nothin' but broken promises and not havin' anythin' to show for it. That shit fuckin' haunts me. It haunts me.

*(A long, painful beat. Nikki recalls herself. She doesn't answer.)*

And that's what you did that night was so fuckin' selfish.

NIKKI

Selfish...All right. I kept the sonogram the night after it happened. Yeah, I held on to it. Carried it around with me everywhere I went. God, I even became obsessed with it. I think about that baby and how it would've laughed. How it would've cried...how if our child was a boy, he would've had your eyes and your beautiful smile. I would think about how you rub your hands on my stomach and sing to it while I was asleep. Tray, I think about that every single day. I think about it so much it keeps *me* up at night. Because I destroyed something that our love made. I destroyed a part of you and a part of me.

But I had no choice. I couldn't imagine seeing the look in my father's eyes if I told him I was pregnant. Or the look of my mother, who came from nothing but had to become small and be the dutiful wife. She had to do it to preserve black excellence. I have to carry that legacy on my shoulders every day I go to campus. When I have to walk into Dr. Cook's office. I carry that when I'm the top honor of my law class. So, yes, it killed me. It still kills me every day. So, maybe I am selfish. Because I did it for me. I did it for us.

*(Trayvon looks deep into her eyes. He tenderly wipes the tears from her eyes. Understanding? Angry? He storms up the stairs, gone. Lights fade on a crying Nikki.)*

## SCENE FIVE

*(A few days later. Some fyyyye ass R&B meets us as the lights rise. Aaron is at a recording mic, headphones over his ears, laying down some background vocals. In his own element. Nikki appears at the top of the stairs, watching him sing. A smile washes across her face. Aaron notices her. Pulls off his headphones.)*

NIKKI

Oh, didn't know you were down here. I'll go--

AARON

*(Pulling off his headphones.)*

Oh, hey, Nikki. No, please, come sit. I'm just down here, doing nothin'.

NIKKI

It's not nothing. You're working on your music. *(A beat, then...)* I told Dr. Cook to meet me here.

AARON

Oh, yeah. It's cool. How are you holdin' up?

*(She sits on the couch.)*

NIKKI

Honestly, I don't know how I'm holding up. I can't stop crying. I can't stop being mad at him.

AARON

Tell you the truth, I kinda know how you're feelin'.

NIKKI

Yeah?

AARON

My girlfriend in high school, who I was goin' to marry, by the way, cheated on me with my best friend. Talk about a graduation gift.



NIKKI

Shit...I am so sorry for that. Now, if that would've happened, I would have to cut both Taronda and Trayvon. *(Beat.)* Did you ever get over it?

AARON

I have to say, it hurt for a long time. Hell, honestly, sometimes I believe I'm still not over it. I don't know, the pain eats away at you at times.

NIKKI

That's comforting. How'd you get through it?

AARON

I eventually forgave both of 'em and moved on. I took up music, and it healed me. Granted, she ended up with a kid with some random nigga, and he doesn't even help her with the baby, so I dodged a big ass bullet there. Life's a muhfucka, ain't it?

NIKKI

*(Laughs.)*

Ah...Thank you for making me laugh. It's been a while.

AARON

You'll get through it. I promise. It'll take a long time, but you'll get through it, Nikki. You're the most amazing, most beautiful woman I've ever known. And the fact that you bailed Trayvon out of jail just shows your strength, your loyalty. I honestly don't know if I would've done what you've done.

NIKKI

Loyalty? Yeah, and look where that got me. Everything is ruined. My relationship and maybe Umoja too. *(Shaking her head.)* Umoja...everything is falling apart, and I'm thinking about a damn group. Oh, bitch... *(Fanning herself.)* Stop all this crying.

*(He wipes the tears from her cheeks. It's tender. A bit of a connection.)*

AARON

It's okay to cry...I'm not judgin'.

NIKKI

Thank you, Aaron.

AARON

For what? I'm just talkin'--

NIKKI

For making me feel better. For making me laugh.

AARON

It's no problem at all. But, you know, I wish I had someone like you back in high school. I would've never hurt you. Honestly, we probably would've been married by now.

*(Her eyes are fixated on Aaron intently. Clearly, these two are crossing some dangerous ass lines. But then, out of nowhere, Nikki plants lips on his. Like lips to the forbidden fruit, Aaron melts into the temptation. With the strength of Samson himself, Aaron pulls the fuck back!)*

AARON

Nah, we shouldn't do this. This ain't right. Look, I know I may be the new guy to the group, but I wouldn't feel right doing this.

NIKKI

I know, but I just need to feel better, feel wanted.

AARON

You still love him, Nikki. And we both wouldn't feel good about this. Look, I'm sorry if I misled you.

NIKKI

You're right...I'm so sorry. What the hell was I thinking? Fuck him.

AARON

Look, Trayvon is a good guy. He just messed up, is all. Like we all do. But Nikki, he needs you.

*(The door bell rings.)*

NIKKI

That's probably Dr. Cook.

AARON

I'll go get it and send her down for you.

NIKKI

Okay. Thanks again, Aaron. For being a good friend.

AARON

Always, Nikki. Always.

*(Aaron disappears upstairs. Nikki stands and paces the floor nervously. Dr. Cook comes down the stairs.)*

DR. COOK

Hello, Nikki.

NIKKI

Dr. Cook, thank you so much for meeting with me today, I know this is a really inopportune time--

*(Dr. Cook's phone rings out of nowhere. She takes a breath, annoyed. Presses the end button.)*

DR. COOK

I am so sorry, things are really, really tense right now.

*(Her phone rings again. She presses the end button.)*

With the rape of Amanda King, the board is reviewing every aspect of this situation thoroughly, and of course, the media wants me to give a statement as the acting president of the university.

NIKKI

Of course, I completely understand. But why do I have a feeling that this is more than about Trayvon and Amanda?

DR. COOK

Nikki, I have to *disband* the Umoja group. It's just that with this current situation, and Trayvon and you being the original creators, the board feels that it's not in the best interest of the university to officiate the club. It just sends the wrong image.

NIKKI

The wrong image?

DR. COOK

Yes. This is very serious, Nikki. I mean, I vouched for him. I personally had high hopes. He is not only a good student, but a tremendous athlete as well. And now, he's lied about that charge and now with the rape--

NIKKI

*(Correcting her.)*

*Alleged* rape, Dr. Cook. Please be careful with how you speak.

*(Slowly, thoughtfully with her words now.)*

DR. COOK

Of course. However, Trayvon was at that party with Amanda. There is video evidence. It's circulating all around social media. Ms. King gave her statement to the police, vividly detailing the incident. My hands are tied.

NIKKI

And anywhere in that statement, does she say that she was calling Trayvon countless times *after* this *alleged* rape?

DR. COOK

Nikki, you know I can't discuss that with you.

NIKKI

Of course, you can't. (*Changing her tactic.*) I guess it's safe to say that Trayvon is a rapist. It's safe to say that Amanda is a *victim*. But it's not safe to talk about Black students fighting for their lives on this campus.

DR. COOK

(*Deeply confused.*)

Well, I'm not sure what that has to do with anything. I make sure the quality of life for the students here at McMillan is our top priority whereas predecessors only cared about the dollar.

(*Nikki retrieves the brick with the note attached and sits it on the table between them. A shocked look from Dr. Cook.*)

DR. COOK

I was...not made aware of this. You have to believe me, Nikki.

NIKKI

Oh, I'm sure because there's a lot that gets overlooked on this campus. For instance, JaQuan Miles. He was pressured by Sean and his friends to over drink, and basically drowned in ice cold water up at Oak Mountain. They left him to be found by a park ranger, Dr. Cook. Now, he has to spend the rest of the semester in a hospital. (*Points to the brick.*) Upsilon did that. Did all of this.

DR. COOK

Do you have proof?

NIKKI

Proof? (*Re: the brick.*) "Niggers and rapists don't belong here at McMillan."

(*Again, Dr. Cook looks down at the brick.*)

DR. COOK

We'll talk with them about this.

NIKKI

I'm sure you will. (*Points to the brick and note that's between them.*) This is why you can't allow some board to cancel Umoja. Black students need a place of safety here on this campus. And it certainly can not be canceled because of some rape allegation.

(*Dr. Cook's phone rings. Again.*)

DR. COOK

*(Presses the end button.)*

Nikki, we won't settle this right now.

NIKKI

Let me ask you this: if Trayvon were white and in the same situation, would all of this happen...or be blown up like it was?

DR. COOK

I'm not sure race has anything to do with it. Come on, Nikki, you know me better than that.

NIKKI

I have to ask because a week ago, you were excited about this group and now one little hiccup, you're taking Umoja away from us.

DR. COOK

I wouldn't merely call a *rape* a hiccup.

NIKKI

He did not rape her!

DR. COOK

Are you sure that you truly believe that?

NIKKI

Yes. Which is way more than I can say about you. *(Beat.)* Dr. Cook, you still haven't answered my question. If Trayvon was white, would all of this be blown up like it is?

DR. COOK

Yes...because rape is rape. No matter what color the rapist is. *(A moment, then...)* The board has come to a decision to expel him. The decision has been made.

NIKKI

He's your favorite student, Dr. Cook. You can not let this happen.

DR. COOK

Nikki, I truly *hate* that this all happened, but it did. Put yourself in my shoes, just for a moment. I just got this position, and something like this happens. I have the board members, parents, and now the local media down my neck, threatening to take action. Sean's father, he's a...piece of work, but he is one of the most powerful and notable alumni donors that we have. And now they're using me to save face, Nikki.

*(Her phone rings. Annoyed, she presses the end button.)*

I have no choice. *(Beat.)* What *if* you're wrong? Nikki, we have to think about the implications of this situation.

If I were to go out and make a statement in complete support of Trayvon, and if we're wrong, I would be sending a message to ALL victims that their stories don't matter.

*(Nikki is silent.)*

Again, put yourself in my shoes.

NIKKI

Come on, Dr. Cook, you and I both know when something like *this* happens, and it involves a white woman and a Black man who is on his way to the top, you can't help but question the motive.

DR. COOK

I'm not going to victim blame Ms. King. Sexual assault is real. It happens to the women in this country every day, and nothing is being done about it. We've seen this situation repeatedly, and it usually ends up on the wrong and painful side of the truth. It's not like how it was back in my day. *(Beat. Slips into a deep, dark place.)* Have you ever had some asshole rub his penis against your leg, pin you against a wall, and dry hump you until he's satisfied? Have you ever had a man feel so threatened by your presence just because you make a few extra dollars than he does? Or he slaps your ass a little too hard, gropes you in a board meeting while everyone's watching and no one does a thing? And don't even think about reporting it. Not a word. Because if you did, your entire career goes down the drain. *(A moment.)* These are the things that happened to me, Nikki. And I can't, in good conscious, allow that to happen to other women. Now, in this day and age, there is HR in place. Even the Me Too movement. I will admit that it has gotten better, but I know we have many more ways to go. What I'm trying to get you to understand, is that the percentage of young women getting assaulted is astronomical. And the rates of those being fake are not very high. And for that, we women have to band together to stop this epidemic.

NIKKI

Spare me your white woman feminism, Dr. Cook, because I have no place in it. You're fighting to sustain your privilege; people like Trayvon and I are fighting for our lives. Yes, we have the Me Too Movement, HR, and things set in place...Which are great. But what do the men like Trayvon have? What protocols are put in place to keep men like Trayvon safe and innocent until proven guilty?

*(Dr. Cook's ringing phone swells with tension between the two.)*

DR. COOK

Now these parents keep calling--

NIKKI

Dr. Cook, now put yourself in my shoes. Because we live in a world where a white boy on a swimming team can rape a girl behind a dumpster, get caught, and not serve any time because the judge felt that it would "destroy" his young life. "Oh, he's young;

he doesn't know any better." And during the whole situation, they didn't regard him as the Stanford rapist. No, he's the "Stanford swimmer." Whereas Trayvon, a Black man, oh, he's the "McMillan rapist," and his livelihood is threatened. We live in a world where Black men have been hung and brutally killed because they were falsely accused of raping a white woman. Emmett Till. Rosewood, FL. Black Wall Street. The Exonerated Five. Need I say more? (*Harshly*.) And I'll be damned if Trayvon will end up like that based on *baseless* accusations and *false* pretenses.

DR. COOK

Nikki, I do not want you to be in the middle of all this. You are a bright, and intelligent woman who has a future ahead of you.

NIKKI

This is not about me, this about Trayvon.

DR. COOK

But this *is* about you. You gave up the opportunity of a lifetime for this relationship. And excuse me for being frank, but men do not deserve that kind of power, Nikki.

(*Her phone rings again.*)

NIKKI

(*In lawyer mode:*)

Just so you know, Kamilah Forbes...and her office in Atlanta has agreed to take on his case and represent him.

(*Dr. Cook is surprised.*)

I guess I didn't *mess* up my New York chances for a 'relationship' after all. And *when* we find out that Amanda King and Sean Sebold *lied* about this rape allegation, may God have mercy on McMillan University. Have a good day, Dr. Cook.

(

*Guiltily, Dr. Cook finally leaves. Nikki grabs her phone through the tears. She dials.*)

NIKKI

Hi... (*Beat, then...*) Amanda, we need to talk.

(*Black out.*)

## SCENE SIX

(*Saturday night. The gang hangs out around the table, playing UNO. Hakeem slaps down a Draw Four.*)

AARON

Now you know damn well you can't do that.

HAKEEM

Nigga, what the fuck do you mean? I thought we were stackin'! *(Snatches his card back.)*  
Black folks always changin' the rules when it comes to UNO. Even UNO themselves be cappin'.

AARON

Oh, so you're gonna tell the creators of the game their rules ain't true.

HAKEEM

Damn skippy...

DENORRIS

I don't think anybody knows the real rules to this game.

*(They all laugh. Taronda comes down the stairs, books in hand. Fresh outta class.)*

TARONDA

Y'all still playing that damn game?

DENORRIS

All day long.

TARONDA

Y'all need to be studying for your finals. Gonna be looking like a sad pussy when professors add them final grades to the Portal.

HAKEEM

We're gonna be all right. You know you're gonna help us with studying sessions.

TARONDA

Oh, am I? We'll see.

AARON

Uno, Uno out, *muthafucka!*

HAKEEM

Man, what-- that's some straight bullshit!

TARONDA

Where's Tray?

HAKEEM

Upstairs.



TARONDA

I ain't seen Nikki nowhere. She said she went to go talk to that girl. It's been like a whole twenty-four hours, and Dr. Cook gotta make her statement by the end of the day.

HAKHEEM

For real? She sure that was a good idea?

TARONDA

Hell-- she's a Black woman scorned.

HAKHEEM

I know Sean better calm his fucking nerves before I beat the shit out of him. And his boys...I got they *nigger* in my closet. Watch what I tell you.

*(Nikki rushes in, takes out her laptop. Types rapidly.)*

TARONDA

Damn, girl, where have you been?

NIKKI

I went to go see Amanda.

TARONDA

Girl, without me? I hope you beat the shit out of her.

NIKKI

No, that wasn't necessary. *(Hooks her phone up.)* I got what I needed.

TARONDA

Okay, please tell me you at least shanked the bitch?

NIKKI

I got something better.

*(She presses a button on her phone.)*

AMANDA (V.O.)

*"Look, I didn't mean for this to go this far. He wasn't answering my calls or my texts. And after Sean found out, he forced me to say Trayvon raped me. I felt bad, and with everything that went on and him going to jail, I needed to clear Trayvon's name. He did not rape me. I'm saying that Trayvon never sexually assaulted me."*

HAKHEEM

So, that hoe lied on Tray? I knew he didn't rape that white girl.

NIKKI

But they were having sex, and Tray told her that he didn't want her anymore. He loved me, which made her mad. And now, I'm uploading it up to social media. (*Calling out for Trayvon.*) Tray!

TARONDA

Ugh! The *caucasity* of that bitch.

HAKEEM

We knew it. Tray ain't capable of raping nobody. Hell yeah, upload that shit to Tik Tok, Insta, all of it.

NIKKI

Doing that. But I want to give Dr. Cook one more chance to do the right thing.

(*Trayvon enters.*)

NIKKI

Trayvon, you'll never guess what I got.

TRAYVON

What?

NIKKI

I got proof that you didn't rape Amanda.

TRAYVON

You got the proof?

HAKEEM

Your girl got a recording and everythin'.

TRAYVON

You serious?

NIKKI

Yes. I'm gonna give Dr. Cook one more chance to clear your name with the press.

HAKEEM

My nigga is innocent!

TRAYVON

What about Dr. Cook--

(*The door bell rings.*)

TARONDA

Oh, I got this. I'm about to make this entrance all grand and shit. Hold on.

*(She disappears upstairs.)*

TRAYVON

I don't know what to say.

NIKKI

A "thank you" would be nice.

TRAYVON

Thanks, babe.

*(He hugs her. Taronda and Dr. Cook enter. Taronda, however, enters grandly before her.)*

TARONDA

Here she is!

NIKKI

Dr. Cook, thank you so much for coming on such short notice...But I just wanted to show you something that's very important.

DR. COOK

What is it?

*(Nikki takes out her phone and plays the recording.)*

NIKKI

Before you make whatever statement, I need you to know something. Amanda King lied the whole time and this was all a set up by Sean Sebold and his Upsilon buddies.

DR. COOK

*(At a loss...)*

How...?

NIKKI

That's the thing, Dr. Cook. I simply went after the truth and investigated it on behalf of my boyfriend, Trayvon.

DR. COOK

*(To Trayvon.)*

Trayvon, I am so sorry. This has to be the most embarrassing thing--

TRAYVON

Not as embarrassing having your whole life posted all over the news. The things I've done for this school.

Coach ain't had my back, the team didn't have my back, except for Hakeem, of course. And if it wasn't for my friends, my life...my life could've turned out bad. Real bad.

DR. COOK

Yes. I am terribly sorry, Trayvon. I am so sorry.

TARONDA

Sorry's don't fix all of this.

NIKKI

Yes, Dr. Cook, she's right. You and this school left Trayvon out in the cold when he needed you the most. Also, I'm having a hard time believing that racism is not an issue on this campus, and you have just been appointed President of this university, this would not be a good *image* for you. (*Looks to Trayvon.*) Now, if you don't want us to take legal action for negligence, pain, and suffering, reparations need to be made.

TRAYVON

You know, Dr. Cook, going to jail and having my name trashed on social media like that-- I want something bad for Sean and Amanda...I want them expelled.

DR. COOK

*Son*, I know you're angry, but Sean's father is a member of our board.

TARONDA

Uh, uh. White privilege don't work in this house. Expel them.

DR. COOK

I don't have that kind of power. Legally, Amanda King can be dealt with because she made a false report against Trayvon. But Sean, there is still no substantial proof that he did anything illegal.

NIKKI

Dr. Cook, I know you're not a bad person. You're a woman between a rock... (*Hands her the brick.*) And a hard place. But you have to make the right choice here. You've dealt with a lot, and I am empathetic to that, but you have to acknowledge the privilege you have. Even though Trayvon has us, there are so many men like him that are not so lucky. And that's what I'm trying to get you to understand.

TRAYVON

Well, at least get Umoja back. We want it official. That had nothing to do with Nikki or my friends. And it's clear, that Black students here at McMillan are gonna need a safe space to come to.

DR. COOK

That I'll be more than happy to do. You all deserve it.

*(She grabs the brick and starts to go. Nikki trail behind her.)*

DR. COOK

I will make a statement. I mean, it's only right. Even though with these new revelations, they'd want to keep things on the hush. *(To Trayvon.)* But the same grace was not offered to Trayvon.

*(Trayvon crosses to her, holds out his hand. Dr. Cook shakes it. A moment. And then she leaves.)*

TARONDA

BIIIIIITTTCHHHHH, we 'bout to turn this campus into *muhfuckin* Wakanda.

HAKEEM

*(Noticing Trayvon's demeanor.)*

What's wrong, bruh?

TRAYVON

After all this...I'm so glad you all stood by me. I was afraid for a moment, but you all stood by me.

HAKEEM

What you talking? You know we got you, dude.

TRAYVON

I know y'all do. I know.

NIKKI

Tray, what is going on?

*(He crosses to the stairs, leaving his friends surprised and dumbfounded.)*

NIKKI

Tray...

*(Black out.)*

## SCENE SEVEN

*(In the dark. A spot light appears. Dr. Cook stands with a piece of paper in her hands. We hear the snapping of cameras and rising voices of the local press. As they hush...)*

DR. COOK

Thank you. I am President Dr. Judith Cook, and I am the University president here at McMillan University. First and foremost, I can tell you that McMillan University does *not* tolerate any act of sexual violence. We know that sexual assault is still an unfortunate reality on college campuses. We continue to be proactive in implementing campus safety measures and providing support and education to our students, faculty, and staff.

It is never your fault to those who are victims and survivors of sexual assault. I want to be clear on that. With the case of Amanda King and Trayvon Gardner, it has come to our attention that it was falsified. The assault never happened, and Trayvon Gardner is innocent. Trayvon is a bright young man caught in a very dangerous situation. And here at McMillan, we fully support him. Regarding Amanda King, the local authorities are launching an investigation for filing a false report against Trayvon Gardner.

*(She places the brick on the podium. More sounds of cameras flashing and voices rise.)*

DR. COOK

As far as the racial tension and THIS brick being thrown at Trayvon's residence with racial epithets, I will personally see that those involved be reprimanded. Thank you for your time.

*(Lights fade to black.)*

### SCENE EIGHT

*(Next semester is here. The lights rise on Hakeem and Aaron getting the living room ready. They both have on a shirt that says "Umoja." Same as NIKKI'S painting.)*

HAKEEM

Yo! These shirts are fire.

AARON

Right. Can't believe we're official.

HAKEEM

Low key, y'all, this don't feel right without Tray.

DENORRIS

I know. He'll be back. He's only a couple of hours away in Atlanta with his mama.

HAKEEM

I know, it's just crazy that he dipped out after the finals and just left for Christmas break. I even text him to see if he signed up for classes starting tomorrow. Nothing.

DENORRIS

I'm sure he's fine. Maybe he'll be back tonight. *(They place a 'Welcome Back' basket on the table.)* There we go.

HAKEEM

Who's that for?

DENORRIS

Hakeem, you signed the card.

HAKEEM

You know I don't be payin' attention. I still can't believe Sean and his stupid ass crew never got expelled.

DENORRIS

That's the way of the world. But...another day, another battle. This is for Quan. He's out of the hospital, doing way better than doctors expected, and he's gonna be at the initiation meeting today. We should make him feel welcomed. You know, after everything.

TARONDA

*(Appearing at the top of the stairs.)*

Nikki, bring your ass! *(To the boys.)* What y'all doing? The pledges gonna be here in a minute. Come on, y'all.

*(Nikki comes down the stairs.)*

NIKKI

What are you yelling for? Don't want the pledges to think we're ghetto.

TARONDA

Whew, girl, you bougie as hell. *(To Hakeem, batting her eyes.)* 'Keemie, go help up stairs. The sign in the yard needs some lifting.

DENORRIS/AARON/NIKKI

*(Incredulous.)*

*Keemie?!*

HAKEEM

Shut y'all asses up. Y'all know that's my girl. I got you, babe!

*(Hakeem runs upstairs.)*

TARONDA

Heard from Tray? *(No answer from Nikki.)* Damn, he's really taking this break thing to a whole other level, huh? I talked to his Auntie Caroline, and she said he ain't even been on Facebook.

NIKKI

I even texted him because I was worried. But he just sent he's doing good, and that's it.

TARONDA

Yeah, well, I can't believe it's finally here. Umoja initiation week.

NIKKI

Yeah, we did it. It's been hell, but we did it.

TARONDA

All because of you and Tray.

NIKKI

Well, if he wants to see this, he should be here, right?

*(Trayvon appears at the top of the staircase. Taronda and Tray wink at each other. And all of his smoothness and charisma...)*

TRAYVON

Hey, Nikki...

NIKKI

Tray...

*(Nikki goes to long, heartfelt hug him.)*

TARONDA

I'll give y'all some space.

*(Taronda exits. Trayvon opens his button up and his shirt says "Umoja".)*

TRAYVON

I just came back because I wanted to see the first day for Umoja and to see Quan, too. Heard that he's outta the hospital. *(Looks at her.)* You look good. Real good. It was in your eyes that night.

*(Nikki stops at the edge of the steps.)*

It was a look I had never seen before. Empty. You were mad, I was mad, and I felt it. I literally felt us break apart. You said we were done, and you meant it. There was no way for us to come back to us. You made a decision, and I reacted. I slept with Amanda because I knew in my heart we were done. We were over. I know you may not believe and I know you can't come to terms with it right now, but I love you way too much to cheat on you, Nikki. And after that, I let you control me. I let you take over things. And now the world has labeled me a rapist. All that noise, all that fucking noise, the one true thing I needed to hold on to, the one person I needed to hear the most, was calling me a cheater. I let you have that because I took so much from you already. And for that, I'm so sorry, Nikki. I'm so sorry. I am so sorry. *(Grabs her hand.)* I see you and I really, really hear you.

NIKKI

Tray, I'm sorry. I'm controlling, I know. *You* deserve a voice in this relationship, and I am so sorry for calling and seeing you as anything other than the man I love.

TRAYVON

Are we trying *us* again?

*(As they're about to kiss, Taronda and the tribe pops in.)*



TARONDA

Y'all these kneegrows are out there, got our yard looking like a whole family reunion.

DENORRIS

We did it, y'all.

HAKEEM

*(Peeks in between them.)*

It's about to be lit!

AARON

C'mon y'all.

*(Nikki and Trayvon look at each other. Smiling. Knowing everything is gonna be all right...)*

TRAYVON

Let's go welcome these people to this club. *(Hand to his mouth.)* UMOJA!!!

ALL

(OOOOOH) MOJA!!!

TRAYVON

Umoja!!!

ALL

(OOOOOOOH) MOJA!!!

*(They all continue the call and response: "(OOH) MOJA" and make their way up the stairs. Hakeem and Taronda go at it. Denorris and Aaron cackles behind them. Trayvon makes his way up the stairs. Looks at Nikki with those eyes. He winks. And he smiles that smile. Nikki falls back and stands in the middle of the room...)*

*(She grabs her poster board that says "Umoja". Nikki pauses for a second. Content. A little bit of hope swells in her eyes. A new beginning? Acceptance? Hopefully? Just maybe? Finally, she gives off the last episode of Fresh Prince vibes the way she looks around the room.)*

NIKKI

Umoja...

*(She disappears upstairs. And Beyonce's "Black Parade" leads us into the MF black out.)*

**END OF PLAY**